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DECEMBER 2002
NUMBER 128

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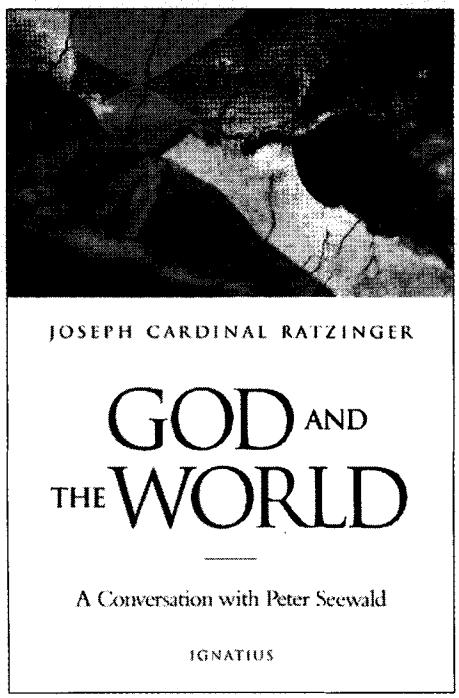

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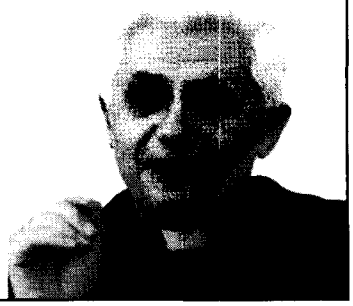

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Pacifism Redux

We, the undersigned, are grateful to Darrell Cole for "Listening to Pacifists" (August/September). He writes with charity, seeking to state clearly the differences as well as the similarities between just war morality and pacifism. However, we fear that his account of pacifism still leaves much to be desired.

Professor Cole notes that he is primarily interested in the pacifism represented by John Howard Yoder, which he correctly describes as the "pacifism of the 'messianic community.'" However, in the next sentence he elides this description in favor of "messianic pacifism," which makes it appear that Yoder's understanding of pacifism is a position that can be isolated from his understanding of the Church. As a result, Prof. Cole makes Yoder's pacifism appear to be constituted by individual pacifists in enclaves of the similarly minded, rather than the presence of a global community of followers of Jesus opposed to the use of force on behalf of, or in opposition to, particular nations precisely because it is transnational.

To suggest, as Prof. Cole does, that Yoder and Reinhold Niebuhr look on Jesus in the same way is fatuous. Niebuhr went to great lengths to show that we cannot follow Jesus. Yoder's whole work was to help us see that through the Spirit we can live, for example, according to the Sermon on the Mount. But more importantly for the "success" of his comparison between Yoder and Niebuhr, Prof. Cole neither notes that Yoder consistently challenged the Niebuhrian presumption that "responsibility" means "involvement with acts of force," nor does he challenge that presumption himself. This seems to us a crucial omission because it makes it easy to assume that Christian nonviolence is rendered politically "irrelevant" simply because Christians should not serve in the military.

Contrary to Prof. Cole's claim, the pacifism of the messianic community does not seek to "build on the liberal-humanistic pacifism that is already widespread." Yoder was at least as critical of liberal pacifism as Niebuhr. Of course, those committed to the pacifism of the messianic community may in some political contexts make common cause with liberal pacifism, for we do not presume that people committed to the pacifism of the messianic community, on the one hand, and those committed to liberal pacifism, on the other, are self-contained, making sense only to themselves. But Yoder's Christological commitments do make it impossible for there to be any fundamental confusion between these kinds of pacifisms. So, while we will not say that Christian ethics is for everyone, neither will we say that the Church's life operates only within a restricted ghetto. The nonviolent witness of the Church is a public and evangelical proclamation, accessible, at least in part, to the watching world. Prof. Cole is therefore wrong to suggest that the pacifism of the messianic community offers no strategy for making the world more peaceful. We believe that the very existence of the Church is such a "strategy," beginning with the refusal of Christians to kill other Christians, which is at least the necessary condition for Christians to explore amid the ambiguities of the world what less violent alternatives might exist.

In his account of the just war doctrine, Prof. Cole seeks to show that a defensible just war position is not derived from a general abhorrence to violence. Rather, just war doctrine is based on the Christian commitment to seek justice in a fallen world. We are sympathetic with attempts to so un-

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derstand just war, but we think the issues surrounding this understanding of just war are much more complex than Prof. Cole's account suggests. He defends the "ahistorical nature" of the just war doctrine, but surely for people who seek to go to war justly it makes some difference what kind of society they think is capable of doing so. Does just war, for example, require some form of Christendom if we are to be sure the war is undertaken by a legitimate authority? What difference does it make that advocates of just war work within the presumptions of a realist foreign policy—as in the case of United States foreign policy—which assumes that one must do evil that good may come? This is to say that we disagree with Prof. Cole's claim that the criteria for *ius ad bellum* are not historically conditioned. He is quite right to reject consequential reasoning, but it is not clear what difference that should make for just war reflection in our world.

Prof. Cole eloquently argues that those committed to just war also must suffer for their convictions. But it remains unclear to us what specific costs he thinks just war thinking may exact. Yoder sympathetically explored these questions in his *When War Is Unjust: Being Honest in Just War Thinking* (revised edition, Orbis, 1996), and as far as we know no advocate of just war reflection has responded to the challenges Yoder presented in that book. Seldom, for instance, does any advocate of just war address the issue concerning whether all the criteria of just war need to be met if the war is to be undertaken by Christians.

Another problem with Prof. Cole's ahistorical account of just war is indicated by his description of just war as a "doctrine." The attempt to label just war a doctrine is of very recent vintage and mistakenly gives the impression that the historical development of just war reflection is much more coherent than in fact it was and is.

Moreover, such a view assumes that the challenges before the early Church are the same as ours. For example, Prof. Cole says pacifists cannot point to a single Church Father who developed just war doctrine out of "nonviolent assumptions." Such a claim is question-begging, at least in part because the Church Fathers who had nonviolent assumptions were uninterested in developing just war justifications. Arnobius' *Adversus Gentes*, Tertullian's *De Corona* and *De Pallio*, Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogus* (books I and II) and *Stromata* (IV and VII), and Cyprian's *Ep.* 73, *De Bono Patientiae* and *Ad Donatum*—all seem to be instances of Church Fathers working with nonviolent assumptions. And this is not even to mention the echoes of Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* (e.g., VI. 20, 10) still discernible in Augustine's *City of God* and political writings—perhaps the best (i.e., most well-executed) instance of a Church Father justifying war in the face of the "nonviolent assumptions" held by his forebears and some contemporaries.

Finally, we wonder what Prof. Cole can possibly mean when he says that it is "a sad fact that Christians are always going to have to use violence" and yet also maintain that when just warriors use force justly, "such acts bear no stain of evil." Why, on Aquinas' or Calvin's grounds, would it be appropriate to feel sorrow for an action that is justified? When Aquinas, for instance, asks "Whether sorrow is compatible with moral virtue?" he repeats Aristotle, saying, "To have controlled sorrow for what we should feel sorry about is a mark of virtue" (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 59, 3). In this way, Aquinas is careful to distinguish appropriate objects of sorrow from inappropriate ones, such that he may say that the virtuous person may feel sadness for another's sin. But he does not say that a Christian should feel sorry about an act of justice. Admittedly, in the medieval world penance was required from those returning from a just war, but surely such a requirement was because the Church continued to have some sense that war is incompatible with the gospel. Prof. Cole does not think war is incompatible with the gospel. So why is he sad?

Stanley Hauerwas
J. Alexander Sider
Duke University Divinity School
Durham, North Carolina

Darrell Cole replies:

The letter from Stanley Hauerwas and J. Alexander Sider is most appreciated. I am grateful for the opportunity to do two things in response: first, to clear up a misunderstanding that my article may have suggested; and second, to reemphasize one of the main points of the piece—namely, that pacifists have a very difficult time trying to think in just war terms.

Hauerwas and Sider are perfectly right to take me to task for implying that the pacifism of the messianic community "builds on the liberal-humanistic pacifism that is already widespread." I did not mean to imply that pacifists of the messianic community have consciously built upon liberal-humanistic pacifism (though my sentence can be so read—mea culpa), but only to point out what should be obvious to all: that the inroads pacifists of the messianic community have made in Roman Catholic and Protestant mainline circles can be traced to a prior acceptance of liberal-humanistic pacifism by many in those circles. In other words, the message of messianic pacifism finds a ready home in those who have already accepted certain beliefs of a liberal-humanistic persuasion (e.g., that the use of force is out of step with the moral and spiritual progress of humanity).

I do take exception to the claim that my argument about the similarities between John Howard Yoder and Reinhold Niebuhr is "fatuous." I do not think it silly to point out that, whatever their differences, Yoder and Niebuhr do share a belief that the life and work of Jesus Christ teaches us that there is something evil about all acts of force, regardless of the goals or intentions of those acts. There is

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no cause for surprise here. We should not forget the young Niebuhr's pacifist leanings.

Hauerwas and Sider, like all pacifists of the messianic community, are at pains to offer a strategy for making the world more peaceful. All strategies for a just peace must include the use of force if they are to be credible, because a just peace is always going to require force on this side of the Eschaton. If we fail to use force to uphold justice, then justice will not be upheld. Laws without the threat of force to back them up are useless, and as G. E. M. Anscombe once noted, men without laws are miserable. Perhaps Hauerwas and Sider realize their dilemma. I can see no other way to interpret their curious claim that pacifists of the messianic community wish "to explore amid the ambiguities of the world what less violent alternatives might exist." Now, it seems to me that, if pacifism of the messianic community is characterized by anything, it is characterized by a renunciation of all use of force, not simply "less violent alternatives." Of course, all our pacifist friends may have in mind is a "lesser evil" approach.

We must keep in mind that when pacifists of the messianic community give advice to just warriors, it is, from their point of view, like giving advice to prostitutes on how to practice their profession more justly. This is an important point. If pacifists are right about the use of force, then soldiering is the same thing, morally speaking, as prostitution. Each is a profession that is inherently evil and out of step with God's kingdom. Such a view of soldiering is hard to establish within the text of the Christian Bible (much less the Jewish one).

Let the reader, for example, try a useful thought experiment. Consider the passage in Luke (3:14) where soldiers come to John the Baptist to be baptized. Simply follow the moral logic of pacifism and substitute "prostitutes" for "soldiers." Can anyone imagine prostitutes coming to John the Baptist to be baptized and John not telling them simply to quit their profession rather than offer advice on how to pursue it more justly? Similar substitutions should be made in the passages where Jesus deals with the centurion of great faith (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-9), where Peter brings the gospel to gentiles for the first time via the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10), and where the writer of Hebrews commends to his Christian audience the acts of force used by noble soldiers in the Old Testament (ch. 11). When we substitute prostitution for soldiery in these passages, the difficulties of reading pacifism back into the New Testament (as all pacifists of the messianic community do) become obvious. Yet all who do read pacifism back into the New Testament, even those who are not against all war, are led to accept a "lesser evil" approach to war. If you accept the lesser evil approach to war, then you cannot think in classical just war terms. This is the main reason why the book trumpeted by Hauerwas and Sider, Yoder's *When War Is Unjust*, is such a failure in just war thinking. On the very first page Yoder claims: "The just war tradition considers war to be an evil." Because his entire approach to just war thinking is based upon this mistaken assumption, his analysis is rendered quite fruitless in the eyes of the classical just war advocate.

Hauerwas and Sider are right to argue that it does make a difference what kind of society is going to war, for not all societies are the sort that are liable to fight justly. I discussed this very thoroughly in my article and I know not else what to say, except that just war does not require a society of Christians. Justice is a natural virtue (part of "preserving grace," according to Calvin) that anyone can acquire. Also, just war is compatible with a realist foreign policy as long as that policy does not require us to do unjust things. When it does, Christians must refuse to participate.

I am surprised to find that Hauerwas and Sider are unsure what "specific costs" I believe just war thinking might exact on the Christian, since I made one such specific cost one of the few areas of agreement between pacifists of the messianic community and just warriors: namely, a willingness to suffer evil and even to die before engaging in evil practices. I think this a great cost. Christian soldiers should be willing to face disgrace and even court martial before participating in unjust military operations.

I find it strange that Hauerwas and Sider think that I am begging the question when I point out an obvious fact, namely, that pacifists cannot point to a single Church Father who contributed to the formation of the just war doctrine out of nonviolent assumptions. Christian pacifists of all sorts never tire in telling us that Christians developed the just war doctrine because of their pacific tendencies. Hauerwas has written repeatedly that Christians developed the just war practice because of their nonviolent assumptions. I simply wished to point out the falsity of this claim. Christians did not develop the just war practice out of nonviolent assumptions, but out of assumptions of justice. The proof of this claim is found simply in looking at the writings of the Church Fathers who developed the doctrine. Moreover, I see no reason to dispense with the term "just war doctrine." If a high degree of coherency among many theologians is necessary for a body of reflection to be called a "doctrine," then there would be few if any Christian doctrines.

Finally, the difficulty pacifists of the messianic community have in trying to think in just war terms is further evident from Hauerwas and Sider's parting shot: to wit, if just war is compatible with the gospel, then why be sad about fighting a just war? After all, did not Aquinas rightly distinguish appropriate and inappropriate sorrow on the basis of the object of that sorrow? Oddly enough, Hauerwas and Sider answer their own question without realizing it. As

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they point out, according to Aquinas the virtuous person may feel sadness for another's sin. Just soldiers and commanders are sorry that evil exists to such an extent that acts of force are necessary to bring about justice, but they are not sorry about their acts of force. Similarly, surgeons should feel sorrow that cancerous tumors exist, but feel joy and even experience a certain amount of professional satisfaction in being able to cut out the cancer. Or closer still, policemen may express sorrow that crime exists, but not at their just acts of stopping crime; and they may and should take professional pride in a job well done when it is well done. Karl Barth, who rarely spoke for the classical Christian view of war, surely got it right when he said that our decision to go to war should be made in sorrow, but once it is made, we ought to go to war joyfully.

Affirmations and Obfuscations

I am neither Evangelical nor Catholic, but I rejoice in the goals and efforts of Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). I therefore read ECT's latest statement ("Your Word Is Truth," August/September) with great anticipation. Unfortunately, while it contains much that is edifying and clarifying, the statement is problematic on several fronts.

First, the Evangelical signatories fudge on their supposed bedrock principle of *sola scriptura*. They purport to distinguish between Scripture that is *sola* (alone) and Scripture that is *nuda* (literally, unclothed). But this is a distinction without a difference: the appropriate (nonliteral, nonphysical) meaning of *nuda* is simply "bare, mere, alone, only." The point of this (unsuccessful) linguistic hair-splitting is, I take it, to permit ECT's Evangelicals to affirm that Scripture must be interpreted in "its churchly context," neither in "isolation . . . from the believing community of faith" nor "apart from the historical existence and life" of that community.

This affirmation, however, is irreconcilable with the principle that Scripture is truly *sola* (alone). To be in "context" with something else is not to be alone; to be in "isolation . . . from" and "apart from" everything else is precisely to be alone. The "widespread misunderstanding" of *sola scriptura* among Evangelicals turns out, then, not to be a misunderstanding at all. It is instead a faithful adherence to the fair meaning of the term, an adherence the Evangelical signatories wish to discard in some measure—but without admitting they are doing so. The signatories' real principle, it would seem, is *prima scriptura*, but they have apparently exercised the better part of valor in choosing not to declare so explicitly.

For their part, the Catholic signatories also fudge. They deny that Tradition is either an "addition" to Scripture or a "parallel . . . source" of authoritative teaching. But that denial cannot be reconciled with the declaration that the Church "does not derive her certainty about revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone." Rather, the Church derives that certainty from both Scripture and Tradition, each of which "must be accepted and honored with equal [i.e., parallel] sentiments of devotion and reverence." If these statements do indeed reflect "widespread misunderstanding" among Roman Catholics, it is likely because they were contained in Vatican II's "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" (*Dei Verbum*) and are now disseminated in the universal *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The Roman Catholic confusion runs deeper, however. In repeatedly affirming that Scripture—or, more precisely, the written canon—is "the *final* authority" (emphasis added), the Catholic signatories have bought into an essentially Protestant conception of the Church. There would seem to be two mutually contradictory ways to conceive of the relationship between the written canon and the Church: either the written canon has logical priority over the Church, or the Church has logical priority over the written canon. The former is the traditional (so to speak) Protestant conception. Thus, the Evangelical signatories stress both "the priority of the gospel over the Church" and the canon's "primacy . . . over all tradition." Conversely, they condemn any theory or practice that "results in the . . . Church standing in judgment over Scripture, rather than vice versa." By contrast, the traditional Catholic (and Orthodox) conception of the relationship does have the Church standing in judgment over Scripture in some sense, for as the *Catechism* forthrightly states, "*the Church* discerned which writings are to be included in the list of sacred books" (emphasis added). Moreover, as to whether the canon or Tradition has primacy, the *Catechism* observes that the Church discerned, i.e., formulated, the canon specifically "by the apostolic Tradition."

Between these two opposing conceptions I do not see any middle ground. One or the other of the contesting institutions must have priority, one or the other source of authority must be "final." It is for this reason that unlike, say, the doctrine of justification (the subject of ECT's previous statement), the relationship between Scripture and Tradition cannot command the "firm agreement" sought by ECT's participants. Simply put, the issue is "church dividing." One who accords priority and final authority to the written canon *must* be a Protestant; one who accords priority and final authority to the Church *cannot* be a Protestant. This was the divide I faced in my own spiritual life, and it is a divide that the ECT statement does a disservice in papering over.

Eric Grant
St. Athanasius Antiochian
Orthodox Church
Sacramento, California

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The Real Dixie

While enjoying my cheese grits at a New Orleans courtyard restaurant it became clear to me why James Nuechterlein ("Dixie, U.S.A.," August/September) was unable to locate the "Old South" in his swing through Dixie. In point of fact, his travels did carry him into the land of the Lost Cause, although I am not sure that he recognized it. Perhaps if Walker Percy were still alive, he could escort Mr. Nuechterlein into his study in nearby Covington and shed some light on the true locus of the old Southern identity today. That identity may indeed be hard to find if one tries to find it in locations or institutions or symbols. The acids of modernity have had their corrosive effect on these areas even in the South, albeit at a delayed rate. The result has been the homogenization of the outward appearance of Southern culture as compared to the rest of the country, as Mr. Nuechterlein notes.

Truth is, the "Old South" is no longer necessarily to be found in a location or on a bumper sticker. Instead it is found in the heart and spirit of the people of today's Dixie. (I pause here to allow readers the opportunity to hear the appropriate timeworn tune in the background as I continue.) "'Tis a gift to be simple," the old Shaker hymn reminds us. In that spirit, the Southern Credo remains as simple today as it did in the 1860s: individuals matter. Live life with passion and commitment. Beware of big government. The most important things are God and homeland, family and friends. Be kind and polite. Honor the women.

"But what about your poor record on the issue of slavery and race relations?" the readers are sure to ask. Indeed this is a dark blot on our past. We cannot speak for the motives of our Southern ancestors on this issue, for history is indeed a distant land. Moving to more recent times, I do note that our poor record on race relations (especially in the Mississippi of my childhood) stemmed primarily from a spirit of fear, misinformation, and misjudgment of the common white Southerner, coupled with the inherent depravity found in all of mankind. Unfortunately such depravity exists on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. As Harvard's Robert Coles reminds us, while examining "the problem of Mississippi" he learned that "there's a little bit of Mississippi in all of us—and a little bit of Massachusetts, South Africa, and Northern Ireland too."

Fortunately, a reformation in race relations is indeed occurring in the South, even among the institutions of Southern conservatism. My own denomination (the Southern Baptist Convention) has repentantly recognized its sin in this area and made public confession. The wounds are far from healed and it remains for future generations to continue the ministry of reconciliation—but at least the process has sincerely begun. God grant it be so.

By the way, I believe that Mr. Nuechterlein would have enjoyed his grits more if he would have added the proper amounts of cheese, salt, butter, and pepper. Southerners have learned over the years that the preparation of grits as well as the living of life is indeed a great balancing act.

Don W. Buckley, M.D.
Executive Committee Officer
Southern Baptist Convention
Pensacola, Florida

Creeping Christian Majoritarianism?

Philip Jenkins suggests ("A New Religious America," August/September) that current immigration policy "will inexorably make the country a far more solidly Christian nation than would have been dreamed of in the 1960s." But all he has really shown is that apocalyptic pluralists have wildly exaggerated the degree to which present trends are increasing religious diversity. A solid majority of recent or future immigrants may indeed be (or will become) Christians; nevertheless, the proportion of the population that is Muslim or Buddhist may still be slightly higher now (or in future decades) than in 1960. More importantly, immigration is contributing to an increasing diversity within Christianity. New Nigerian churches that stem from an African prophetic healing tradition may be somewhat nontraditional in the United States. However, the increase of Christian diversity due to immigration is an old pattern in our nation.

Professor Jenkins thinks that future pluralism is overestimated by scholars and journalists committed to separationist and de-Christianization agendas. But some of the most prominent separationist controversies have no relationship to the cultural dominance of Christianity. Many Jews and Muslims, and possibly even devotees of Zeus or Baal, will support keeping "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Even some conservative Christians give lip service to public interreligious neutrality and profess to be primarily concerned with opposing public neutrality between religion and irreligion. In any case, the argument against Christian majoritarianism influencing public policy rests more on respect for minority feelings than on the alleged disintegration of the majority. I'm only a mild Jewish separationist, but I would not want my niece being assigned by her public school teacher, as a Jewish student in Alabama was reportedly assigned, to write an essay on how Jesus loves her. I hope Prof. Jenkins doesn't want to take Christian majoritarianism too far.

Thomas Robbins
Rochester, Minnesota

Philip Jenkins replies:
Mr. Robbins raises valid concerns. I quite agree that the new Christian immigration is very diverse, and many of the new arrivals might well be comfortable with the church-state

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arrangements they find in the U.S. Mexicans in particular have a long tradition of official church-state separation in their home country, however often the principle is violated in practice. I did not mean to imply that the misleading stress on extreme religious diversity arises solely from a political agenda, because the error is often innocent. However, I felt it was important to challenge what has become a disturbing orthodoxy about the multi-faith Babel of which many seem to be dreaming with unabashed glee.

Of course Mr. Robbins is right to raise objections to religious majoritarianism of any kind. He shocks me when he tells his story of gross insensitivity towards non-Christian students, though I fear that I can top his example. I am aware, by repute, of a secular-minded teacher who penalized an orthodox Jewish student for her insistence on referring to the deity as G-d, and her failure to spell the name properly. From invincible human stupidity, may God (and Zeus, and Baal) deliver us.

Further Reading

There always seems something churlish about an author complaining about a reviewer, particularly when the reviewer in question, David G. Dalin, is critical of only one chapter of my *Popes and Politics: Reform, Resentment, and the Holocaust*, the chapter titled "The Pope and the Shoah" (Books in Review, August/September).

The remaining chapters are concerned with nineteenth- and twentieth-century historical precedents to the present situation, with personal and institutional renovation, and with distortions and dissimulations by such authors as James Carroll, Michael Phayer, Garry Wills, and Susan Zuccotti (writers of whom Mr. Dalin is also critical). Since the latter are explicitly relied on by Daniel J. Goldhagen in the *New Republic* preview (January 21, 2002) of his recently released book on Pius XII and the Holocaust, the material on the manifold errors of these authors may prove of particular value.

Justus George Lawler
St. Charles, Illinois

Scandal Time III

I agree with Richard John Neuhaus that the crisis in the Catholic Church stems from the infidelity of many bishops and priests to the Church's magisterial teaching on sexual morality ("Scandal Time III," Public Square, August/September), and I agree too that the American bishops in Dallas wrongly pretended that the central issue in the crisis was the criminal depravity of a small percentage of priests rather than the depraved recklessness of a large percentage of bishops in shielding and reassigning such priests when they knew these men posed grave dangers to children. But I must disagree with Father Neuhaus' argument that the bishops' zero tolerance policy adopted in Dallas is incompatible with a Christian understanding of redemption.

The zero tolerance policy requires that any priest who at any time sexually abused a minor will be removed from ministry and, subject to applicable provisions of canon law, dismissed from the priesthood (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* [2002] at Art. 5). Fr. Neuhaus argues that this policy is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of redemption because it applies even to "faithful priests who did one bad thing thirty years ago and have since had an impeccable record and are clearly no threat to anybody." Such a priest, Fr. Neuhaus says, is to be "welcomed as a forgiven sinner to the company of forgiven sinners that is the Church." The zero tolerance policy, he suggests, "may have changed the very self-understanding of the Church."

There is an important truth in what Fr. Neuhaus says, for even when a priest must be removed from ministry, the Church should still be responsible for him. In New York and elsewhere reports circulate of elderly priests being turned out of their rectories on a day's notice and being left with no means of support and nowhere to go. This is a grave offense against charity and, incidentally, a violation of canon law, which provides that a bishop must worthily support his priests when they are removed from ministry and, if they are truly in need, even after they have been dismissed from the clerical state (Canon 1350). No matter how often a priest may have sinned—whether once or seven times seventy times—and no matter whether the priest remains in ministry or is removed from it, his bishop must remain a father to him and, like the divine Father, must never withdraw his paternal love.

That said, however, I think Fr. Neuhaus' argument converts into a theological question about redemption what is really a prudential question about the danger of recidivism among sex offenders. Redemption applies to a man qua man, not qua priest, and it implies that God, who wills all men to be saved, offers the grace of repentance to all men, no matter how grievous their sins. Christians must welcome back into the Church all repentant sinners—not just the ones who sinned only once, not just the ones who have not sinned again for a long time, and not just the ones unlikely to sin again in the future.

When the repentant sinner is a priest, however, it is a separate, prudential question whether he should be allowed to continue in ministry, just as it is a prudential question whether a good man seeking ordination ought to be ordained in the first place. The theology of redemption does not answer such questions. We need, rather, an empirical inquiry about probabilities and prudential judgment about risks. If we ultimately conclude that our ability to predict the future actions of a putatively re-

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formed sinner is too imperfect to put a child at risk, then we merely admit the limitations of our own knowledge of some individual's future conduct. It is our own knowledge, not the divine mercy, in which our faith is limited.

And thus we come to zero tolerance, the rationale underlying the policy being that when a man sexually molests a minor, even if it be only once, we can never be so sure of his future conduct that we may risk the innocence of children on our hopes that the man will not sin again. Fr. Neuhaus, I think, implicitly concedes that the danger of recidivism, and not the doctrine of redemption, is the real issue when he acknowledges the need to argue that "there is not a scintilla of evidence that a person who did a stupidly wicked thing many years ago and is repentant and has rendered decades of faithful service without a hint of suspicion poses any threat whatever to children." In other words, Fr. Neuhaus concedes that, if there is reason to believe that a priest poses a threat to children, then the priest must be removed from ministry, but he thinks that there are some priests who, though they sinned once, are nevertheless reliably known not to pose any further threat.

Now I agree with Fr. Neuhaus that a man who once sexually abused a minor but has long lived an exemplary life probably poses no threat to children. But in this case probability, even great probability, will not suffice. In my view, even if the man has resisted his temptations for a long time, we can never be so sure about him that we may risk the innocence of children on our belief in his future good conduct. The potential harm is so enormous that I, at least, would never trust such a man with my child. Much less would I think that I had the right to trust such a man with the children of parents who do not know the man's history and are not being given an informed opportunity to decide for themselves whether to trust the man with their children. But if the bishops retain discretion to continue past abusers in ministry, they arrogate to themselves precisely this authority to decide on behalf of unsuspecting parents whether to put their children at risk. Catholic parents, who have the primary authority for the protection and formation of their children, are not, I venture to say, generally prepared to delegate this kind of decision to their bishops.

There's a final point, incidentally, against the case-by-case approach. In deciding whether to allow a priest to remain in ministry, we have before us the priest pleading for mercy but not the unknown children we are putting at risk. When the interests of many parties are at stake but only one of the parties is known to the decision-maker, a cognitive bias known as the availability heuristic leads decision-makers to systematically undervalue the interests of the parties less cognitively accessible to them. Hence, in applying the case-by-case approach, the decision-maker will tend to systematically discount the danger to children. When the decision-maker also regards the priest in question as a friend, the obvious conflict of interest aggravates the cognitive distortion. To remedy this distortion, balance the picture of the priest pleading for mercy with the image of a child, terrified and crying when our predictions about the man's future good behavior turn out wrong. Or just ask the mother of a child whether she so trusts her bishop's ability to predict the future actions of a one-time child molester that she would trust her child with the man in question. We all know what she would say.

Robert T. Miller
New York, New York

Richard John Neuhaus thinks that zero tolerance is a violation of both justice and mercy. If a priest has sinned by committing a sexual crime against a child, but he has repented and lived an exemplary life for many years, Father Neuhaus thinks it wrong that he should be removed from the ministry.

To answer questions of church discipline I often ask myself, WWPT—What Would Paul Think?

Paul himself sinned against God by persecuting the Church and thereby persecuting Christ. But he did it in ignorance, out of his zeal for the law of God, and therefore received mercy; he did not know what he did. He never knowingly violated the law of God.

What would Paul think about allowing a child molester to be a leader of the Christian community? He would certainly accept any repentant criminal as a member of the Church, and Corinth had an unsavory collection of them, but he held leaders to a higher standard.

When Paul described a bishop-presbyter, he emphasized that he must be of good character. The bishop-presbyter like all men is a sinner, but some sinners have good character—that is, their sins are the ones that even just men fall into. He must be the husband of only one wife—that is, if he has been widowed he must not have remarried because remarriage (although allowed) shows an inability to govern sexual desires. A bishop-presbyter must be respected by outsiders.

Child molestation reveals that one is not of good character, and no one, even a worldly sinner, has much respect for a child molester. A bishop publicly humiliates a priest when he removes him from active ministry for an offense of which the priest repented long ago. But if the priest is truly repentant, he knows that this humiliation is inadequate reparation for the sin he has committed against the child and against God, and will accept it willingly.

Leon J. Podles
Senior Editor, *Touchstone*
Baltimore, Maryland

What would we do if our Lord Jesus would establish a zero tolerance policy towards sin? What if one sin was enough to send you to hell? No

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chance for repentance, no confession, no hope.

Christianity is about repentance and grace. Those who have sinned, but by the grace of God have returned and have changed their lives, should be respected for it. The cases of priestly abuse should be treated on a case-by-case basis according to Catholic canon law and most of all according to Christian charity.

Bishops should not be subject to lay or state supervision and they should not cease to be fathers and pastors of their flock in the love of Christ.

I am appalled by what some of the abusive priests have done, but the Church should not be submitted to the wishes of the media, state, or even the flock.

Rudy Garcia
El Paso, Texas

In "Scandal Time III," Richard John Neuhaus expresses in several places his concern for a now-elderly priest who is "repentant" and has "rendered decades of faithful service without a hint of suspicion" that he "pose[s] a threat to children or anyone else," because such a priest may now "be thrown out as an abuser," not "welcomed as a forgiven sinner to the company of forgiven sinners that is the Church."

With due respect for Father Neuhaus' human compassion, I submit that even if the priest were guilty of nothing more than harboring sexual lust in his heart toward a male or female of any age, the priest ought to have immediately recognized that he had not been given the gift of celibacy, and thus had badly misjudged his ability to keep his ordination vows.

Odessa Elliott
Stony Point, New York

After reading "Scandal Time III," I must say that I am somewhat puzzled and dismayed by both the tone and substance of Richard John Neuhaus' argument.

As part of Father Neuhaus' critique, he has conjured up what I believe to be a straw man: the lovely Fr. X. This fellow slipped just once, doing a "bad thing," and has since led a life beyond reproach. Fr. Neuhaus omits reminding his readers just what the "bad thing" was in the present context, the sexual abuse of a child. The image of a trusting child being led away to have gross, disgusting, perverted acts performed on him by someone he trusted should be forever before our eyes. If this doesn't justify lifetime removal from church leadership, what does? Serial murder? Detonating a nuclear bomb in Manhattan? Or nothing at all? Jesus said it would be better for someone who abuses these little ones to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck. Was that unduly harsh?

Fr. Neuhaus speaks of the victims' groups with what strikes me as a somewhat disparaging tone, saying that they may never be satisfied. I hope that they are not satisfied as long as the current scandalous state of the Church exists, but rather remain a constant rebuke.

Please forgive me if I have misunderstood Fr. Neuhaus' views, but I feel that zero tolerance is the only just policy possible given the deplorable record of the bishops and that it is desperately needed to begin the process of renewal.

Howard Holley
Barnet, Vermont

Richard John Neuhaus is unhappy with a zero tolerance policy that can boot his hypothetical Father X out of the ministry even though the now-elderly priest only "had one abusive incident" with a minor many years past. Well, I'm unhappy with Fr. Neuhaus' phrasing. A person doesn't "have an abusive incident"; rather, a person commits a crime of abuse: a crime that many, including this conservative Catholic, would position just one or two steps below murder on the hierarchy of evil. And just as there is no statute of limitations for murder, even one murder committed long ago, there is no statute of limitations for a crime of abuse, even one crime of abuse committed long ago.

Nor can Fr. X consider himself redeemed after decades of good behavior and faithful service to the Church. The path to redemption must necessarily pass through punishment and atonement, and the abuser must tread this path voluntarily, otherwise his redemption is incomplete, an evasion of responsibility, a failure to act honorably. Not until he has confessed his crime as a sin (to another priest), and his sin as crime (to police), and not until he has accepted and undergone the punishment that is his due, thereby atoning for his sin and his crime, can he be fully redeemed. And this punishment should entail, among other things, being booted from the ministry. I can't trust an abusive priest: Who knows when or whether his deviant sexual urge—notoriously difficult to get rid of, notoriously difficult to resist—might come upon him again, causing him to "have" another "abusive incident"? Defrock him: and if he wants to continue his relationship with the Church, let him do so as a member of the laity.

Steven Weingartner
La Grange Park, Illinois

A dimension not treated by Richard John Neuhaus' excellent scandal commentary and ignored by many critics of the zero tolerance policy for sexual abuse is the importance of such a policy as a means of lifting suspicion that rests on the shoulders of the wonderful priests and religious who faithfully serve the Christian community. They deserve a policy that will allow them to be effective and respected.

Also, a criminal breach of trust—which is the nature of the offense—warrants removal from ministry just as it does in the professions of law and medicine. The legal profession has suffered by allowing too many lawyers found guilty of criminal conduct to return to practice after sus-

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pensions or reprimands. The public does not respect the "slap on the hand" legal disciplinary system that has hurt the profession, and students are not drawn to the profession with the same respect for its canons and ideals when serious misconduct does not result in total expulsion. The bishops are wise to see the need for zero tolerance as a key means for upholding the standards of the ministry.

William T. Hart
United States District Judge
Chicago, Illinois

Sorry, but I can't buy the argument that the news media's obsession with decades-old tales of the homosexual seduction of teenagers—but only when done by Catholic priests—has nothing to do with Catholic-bashing.

It's true that this country's bishops disappointed me (again) by leaving Dallas with a policy which, while it seems to say that a priest could be permanently removed from ministry if one church lady doesn't like the way he looked at her daughter, continues to ignore the source of the current scandal—the bishops' "don't ask, don't tell" policy of enforcing Vatican regulations designed to save Catholic youth from moral and theological perversion.

But if the media were honest about how widespread the problem of the seduction of youth is, it would be revealed that most of the solutions they offer to solve the problem amount to giving the foxes more control of the henhouse.

Three cases of homosexual abuse that were being prosecuted in Manhattan, the media capital of the world, in May 2002 involved Riverside Church, District Attorney Robert Morgenthau's own synagogue, and the Harlem Boys Choir. And *Christianity Today* reported that there were "seventy child abuse allegations reported against American Protestant churches each week during the last ten years," a quarter of which were against pastors ("Go Figure," May 21, 2002). But the media know how to be "discreet" about stories that don't promote their agenda.

For instance, there's no demand that the schools shape up, despite the fact that in 1998 *Education Week* searched newspaper archives and computer databases and found 244 allegations against teachers in a six-month period, ranging from unwanted touching to serial rape. And on June 21, 2002, the *New York Times*, in "Silently Shifting Teachers in Sex Abuse Cases," noted a study of 225 complaints against teachers from 1990-94 and found that in only one percent of the cases did superintendents follow up to ensure that molesting teachers didn't continue teaching, while at least 16 percent of the teachers were able to get new teaching jobs. The study estimated that 15 percent of the country's fifty million public schoolchildren will be abused by a school employee. And yet we hear demands that the bishops follow the example of the public schools and Protestant churches.

Don Schenk
Allentown, Pennsylvania

While properly emphasizing that the focus of the scandal should be on our failures of fidelity to Catholic truth, Richard John Neuhaus ironically takes refuge in the liberal assumption that life circumstances can be reengineered to alter life's divinely endowed essence and particularity of purpose, or at least alter the odds of its being realized. Removing priests from ministry does not derail the Christian imperatives to conversion, repentance, and redemption as he fears. Neither could placing criminals in prison cells ever interfere with God's redemptive plan.

It is not any less true for being a cliché that right is right no matter who is right and wrong is wrong no matter who is wrong. In the secular culture, politicians caught in wrongdoing claim to take full responsibility, which translates to lying low until the press cools off. What kind of fidelity is to be realized in having prelates perform a slam-dunk imitation of a Clintonite? Scandal times in the Church do come and go, but with their damage permanently accomplished. The only time this is avoided is when saintly action is taken, which is the essence of fidelity. There are principles in law that allow criminals to publicly plead to be indicted when none are forthcoming from civil authorities. There are also principles of law that allow criminals to plead for longer prison sentences than those normally accorded their convictions. This ought now to be occurring regularly. I am not optimistic about it ever occurring.

Edward J. Baker
Fresh Meadows, New York

Richard John Neuhaus' concerns about gross unfairness should be allayed because the zero tolerance policy does not, in fact, entail that all priests who sexually abuse a minor will be dismissed from the clerical state. The policy requiring dismissal is expressly qualified by reference to canon law, and, under Canons 290 and 1342-2, a priest may not be dismissed from the clerical state without his consent except pursuant to a judgment in a canon court. The American bishops are asking Rome to amend canon law so that a bishop, acting on his own, could dismiss one of his priests, but most observers think Rome will not agree to expand the bishops' authority in this way. Absent such a change in canon law, a bishop seeking to dismiss a priest will have to convince a canon court that the case warrants dismissal, and thus the zero tolerance policy amounts to nothing more than a declaration by the bishops that, because in their view all cases of sexual abuse warrant dismissal from the clerical state, they intend to seek this penalty in all cases. At present at least, there is no guarantee that it will be applied in all cases.

Father Neuhaus also argues that the definition of sexual abuse in the zero tolerance policy is too vague, so

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vague indeed that a priest's erotic musings about a minor with whom he has no other contact would fall within the definition employed. The definition, which is surely very expansive, includes "contacts or interactions between a child and an adult when the child is being used as an object of sexual gratification for the adult," and expressly states that sexual abuse may occur whether or not force is used, whether or not there is actual physical contact, whether or not the child initiated the interaction, and whether or not there is discernible harm. Again, Fr. Neuhaus does have a point. A definition like this would almost certainly be struck down by an American court as unconstitutionally vague.

But when Fr. Neuhaus argues that such poor drafting resulted from the bishops being in a media-inspired panic, he ignores the fact that the very definition he quotes refers to Canon 1395-2, which itself, like canon law generally, employs this kind of very vague language. Canon 1395-2 punishes a cleric who "sins . . . against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue . . . with a person under sixteen years of age." Surely this is even more vague than the definition used in the zero tolerance policy. An American lawyer would deplore the looseness of the bishops' drafting, but, for all its faults, it is no worse than the preexisting standard in canon law.

Jennifer L. Miller
New York, New York

Thank you for "Scandal Time III." In many ways my former pastor, Father Bob Kealy, could be the Fr. X mentioned in your article. Approximately twenty-five years ago, Fr. Kealy came out of the seminary with a drinking problem. During this time, he apparently had a one-night stand with a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old girl. Thereafter Fr. Kealy put himself into a treatment program and has been sober ever since. In that time there has been no further allegations of any sexual misconduct against Fr. Kealy and, at least from what I can tell, he has been a great priest leading an exemplary life.

Neither I nor, I would venture, Fr. Kealy intend to minimize the wrong that was done twenty-five years ago. He betrayed a trust and broke a solemn vow. That great sin, however, was not the end of the Fr. Kealy story, but rather the beginning. If he was dying in his alcoholism, he was reborn in his sobriety. For twenty-five years he gave good and faithful service to his Church. The lost sheep had returned to the fold.

The American Catholic Bishops in Dallas could have celebrated Fr. Kealy's reformed life. Instead, they chose to kick him out of the priesthood. What hurts the worst is that the reason they chose to offer up priests like Fr. Kealy as sacrificial lambs was not simple bad judgment or even plain stupidity, but cowardice.

Over the centuries, faith is tested in many ways. Some are made to choose between making an offering to Jove and death. Some face the decision between living up to Christian ideals of forgiveness and facing the wrath of the *New York Times* and certain yahoos in the pews. Our bishops failed their test in Dallas. Let's hope they are given the second chance that, so far, they are unwilling to give the Fr. Kealys of the world.

John T. McEnroe
Winnetka, Illinois

RJN replies:
These letters are representative of the many received in response to "Scandal Time III." I have already addressed in subsequent issues some of the points raised, so will here try to be brief. Most of the writers do not address what was central to my argument, namely, the unbounded plasticity of the definition of sexual abuse adopted at Dallas. By that definition, abuse can range from a pat on the butt to a hug of congratulation to brutally sodomizing a ten-year-old. Some acts are indiscreet, some are mildly prurient, some are monstrous. It is a grave mistake to assume that the accusations pertinent to the present scandal are typically in the nature of the last. They are not.

Mr. Miller's thoughtful letter rightly focuses on "probabilities and prudential judgments about risks," although he seems to assume that we know more about recidivism than we do. I agree that many people do not now trust bishops to make the relevant prudential judgments. In view of the dereliction of some bishops and of the media barrage, that is understandable, but it is also a great sadness. Sharply reduced levels of trust between bishops and priests, and between lay people and both, may well be the greatest long-term cost of the present crisis.

I do not find in St. Paul or in the Christian tradition any warrant for Mr. Podles' suggestion that sins committed knowingly are any less forgivable than sins committed unknowingly. Of course a "child molester" should not be a leader in the Church. Many who have been and will be removed under the Dallas definition are not aptly described by that term of abuse. A person is not identified by a sinful act. A man who visited a brothel in his twenties and afterwards lived a long life as a faithful husband and father is not forever to be known as a whoremonger. But perhaps Mr. Podles thinks that is the kind of sin that "even just men fall into." I suggest he give some thought to St. Paul's words about Christ dying for us "while we were yet sinners, the just for the unjust."

Mr. Garcia is, I believe, exactly on target, especially with respect to the need for the Church to exercise courage and integrity in governing itself. In the absence of such courage and integrity, long-term damage has been done to the *libertas ecclesiae*, and Dallas greatly exacerbated that damage. Were we to accept Ms. Elliott's understanding of celibacy, I am afraid we would have very few priests. Nor, if applied to chastity and conti-

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nence more generally, would there be many faithful husbands or wives. As for Mr. Holley's serial murderer or nuclear bomber in Manhattan, see above on the range of offenses. I believe the Christian tradition does not support Mr. Weingartner's assertions about the connection between punishment and redemption. Salvation entails, inter alia, being spared punishment that we deserve, especially the punishment of God. As for human law and retribution, a man who drove while drunk ten years ago and got home without incident has no obligation to go to the police and ask to be punished for drunk driving. He should be penitent and grateful. Most of us, if not all of us, have committed wrongs against others, which may or may not have been criminal, and for which we have not been punished but are repentant and forgiven. Thank God. I am afraid that much current discussion about punishment sounds an awful lot like vengeance, which, as we are told, is not ours but the Lord's. Judge Hart is right that "zero tolerance" may serve the good end of upholding standards of ministry, but if zero tolerance entails grave injustices, as I believe it does, I hope the judge would agree that a good end does not justify wrong means. In response to Mr. Baker, see above on punishment and forgiveness. To Mr. Schenk: I said it is our problem and we shouldn't blame the media for it. That is not to deny the media bias to which his letter refers.

Ms. Miller raises an important question. Rome has now called for a modification, along the lines that Ms. Miller suggests, of how the zero tolerance rule adopted by Dallas is applied. But I believe I have accurately depicted what, in fact, Dallas approved. Canon 1395-2, on the other hand, reads: "If a cleric has otherwise committed an offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue with force or threats or publicly or with a minor below the age of sixteen [now raised to eighteen], the cleric is to be punished with just penalties, including dismissal from the clerical state if the case warrants it." That immediately follows 1395-1, which deals with "a cleric who lives in concubinage or a cleric who remains in another external sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue which produces scandal." The text and context make it clear, I believe, that the Canon—in sharpest contrast to the almost unlimited elasticity of the Dallas definition of sexual abuse—is not so vague as Ms. Miller suggests.

Mr. McEnroe's letter nicely illustrates what is so profoundly wrong about the policies adopted at Dallas. It is gratifying that, since I wrote "Scandal Time III," many more priests and lay people are speaking up in defense of priests who are falsely accused, denied due process, or guilty, repentant, and forgiven in connection with offenses that have nothing—absolutely nothing—to do with the imperative purpose of protecting children from sexual abuse. An institution that treats people unjustly in order to deflect criticism from itself is engaged in scapegoating. Scapegoating is unworthy of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is a denial of the gospel of sin and grace by which and for which the Church is constituted.

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Opinion

Celibacy in Context

Maximos Davies

It seems that the one thing everyone knows about the Eastern Churches is that "they have married priests." Unfortunately, this often seems to be the *only* thing many people know about Eastern Christianity. What does not seem to be widely understood is that the Eastern Churches have very distinct theological, liturgical, and spiritual cultures in which the practice of ordaining married men to the priesthood (but not to the episcopate) must be understood. If Western Catholics want to use the example of the Eastern Churches as a guide for their own situation it is imperative that they understand how a married clergy fits into this unique Church culture.

In the Eastern Christian tradition celibacy is associated not with the priesthood but with monasticism. Most Eastern Christians expect their parish clergy to be married family men. But while it is true that Eastern Christians generally value their married clergy, it is equally true that a majority of these believers hold monasticism in even greater esteem. Pope John Paul II emphasized this in his Apostolic Letter *Orientale Lumen* when he said that for the Eastern Churches monasticism is seen as the "reference point" for all Christians. Whatever their *pastoral* preferences, the Eastern Churches are very far from seeing marriage as *theologically* or *spiritually* preferable to celibacy.

This is the first and perhaps the most important point to be made. Eastern Christianity insists that both marriage and celibacy are necessary for a healthy Church. Eastern Christians do not see these two vocations as opposed to each other. They would regard it as suicidal to abandon clerical celibacy in such a way as to imply that the principle of celibacy no longer has any value.

Celibacy in Eastern Christianity is viewed primarily as a form of *asceticism*. Asceticism means, in essence, to live *at the same time* on earth and in heaven. It means to understand that everything we see in this life, everything we touch, taste, think, and feel, is in some way a revelation of the life to come. This means far more than an understanding that this life will come to an end and be replaced by another one. It means that the life we live right now and the life we will live for eternity are in some mysterious way one and the same. "The darkness is passing away," says St. John, "and the true light is already shining" (1 John 2:8).

For an ascetic, time reveals eternity. The ascetic thus wants to be freed from a merely human way of looking at time as a cycle of work and rest, life and death. Instead, the ascetic lives in time as though in the undying freedom of eternity. Therefore the ascetic prays. For an ascetic, food reveals the heavenly Feast. He is freed from a merely animal attraction to food and instead tastes only the spiritual promise that lies hidden inside earthly appetites. Therefore the ascetic fasts. For an ascetic, possessions reveal the many-mansioned Kingdom of Heaven. The ascetic is freed from the slavery to things by seeing in everything the Creator of all things. Therefore the ascetic gives alms.

It is the same with sexuality. For an ascetic, all human relationships—even the sexual act itself—reveal divine love. Hidden beneath the surface of all smaller loves lies the immeasurable abyss of God's love. The ascetic realizes that what other people give him by way of love finds its true and deeper meaning in the One who is the source of all love. Celibacy is the practical recognition of the reality that lies behind the image, of the prototype behind the icon. Human love without celibacy is at best mere sentiment, at worst a form of idolatry.

In either case a merely human love is a closed system, like a river with no outlet to the sea. Face to face, two human beings in love become locked in an embrace of death. St. Gregory of Nyssa—himself a married man—writes of this in his treatise *On Virginity*:

> Whenever the husband looks at the beloved face, that moment the fear of separation accompanies the look. . . . Some day all this beauty will melt away and become as nothing, turned after all this show into noisome and unsightly bones, which wear no trace, no memorial, no remnant of that living bloom.

The tragedy of love and death can only be overcome by the communion of humanity and divinity in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Only when two become three, when a couple becomes a trinity, the third being God, only then can the triumph of death be trampled down in the resurrection. "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied, but in fact Christ has been raised from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:19-20).

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Who then is called to be celibate? Simply put, every single Christian who is capable of love is called to discipline that love through the asceticism of celibacy. Just as every Christian is called to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, so also every Christian is called to be celibate. Seen in its true context of asceticism, celibacy ceases to be a legal requirement for a small section of the Christian faithful and is revealed instead as an aspect of the universal vocation of all believers.

What does this mean in practice? It means that we must no longer divide up the Church in our minds and separate the lay majority who are "allowed" to have sex under certain conditions and the clerical and religious minority who are "not allowed" to have sex at all. The difference is nowhere near so stark. It is merely one of degree. For a legalistic mind, the division between celibate and non-celibate seems vast. For an ascetical mind, however, the difference is negligible. Both the life of marriage and the life of celibacy are directed entirely toward God, and find a common meaning in Him.

It may come as a surprise that I speak of a universal call to *celibacy*. This word has largely juridical associations, especially for Latin Catholics. *Chastity* is the term used in the more general sense to speak of the obligation of all Christians to use the gift of their sexuality in accordance with the divine will. Sexuality is conditioned in the East according to the principles of asceticism and mysticism, not legalism. It is precisely because the East does not think in juridical terms that I have felt free to apply to celibacy a very general meaning, for in the East there is no other way it can be understood. In this area East and West think quite differently. We must be wary of a facile assumption that what works in one tradition will automatically do so in the other.

Looked at from the perspective of the Eastern Churches, celibacy has very little to do with the sacrament of Holy Orders. It has everything to do, however, with the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Through the latter we are born into a new kind of life, into citizenship in the Kingdom of God. We die to this world in Christ and rise again to eternal life. And in this resurrection we "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30).

Once again we see how it is that celibacy is part of the universal vocation of all Christians. Seen in the light of eternity, marriage is revealed as having no meaning in itself. Marriage is honorable not because it "joins two hearts as one," nor because through it new life comes into the world, nor because it provides for a life of comfort and security. Marriage is worthy of reverence only because the two hearts fall into a sacramental embrace with a Third, only because the children born of the union are born again through baptism into a new life, only because together the couple apply to their comforts the balm of asceticism that gives their possessions true and sacramental meaning.

Christian celibacy is marriage baptized. Christian celibacy is the revelation of the presence of the Kingdom of God in every relationship. It is the refusal to see other people as things to be used, even for the sake of romantic love. Celibacy means the willingness to see in sexuality not something merely animal, or simply useful or enjoyable, but instead something mystical.

What then of those who commit themselves to radical celibacy? Herein lies the value of *monasticism* as a public vocation in the Church. Radical celibates present to all Christians flesh and blood tokens of the promise lying mystically beneath every authentic and holy relationship. Celibacy loses its value when it is seen as the preserve of an elite. It takes that value up again when it is seen as part of the common heritage of the entire Church, an asceticism shared by all the baptized.

Here we come to another important insight within the pastoral tradition of Eastern Christianity. Celibacy is not primarily an individual calling. In the first place it is a vocation for the whole Church. Only secondarily is this vocation realized in individual lives. It follows that celibacy cannot be authentic if it is attempted individually. Celibacy can only be lived in a real way if it is seen as a shared way of life. For the Christian East, celibacy is lived corporately and within the context of communal asceticism.

This is the real meaning behind the combined tradition of married clergy and celibate monastics in the Eastern Churches. The proper place for radical celibacy is a life of radical asceticism within that tradition of mutual support provided within the monastic milieu. For parish clergy, such radicalism is seen as out of place—neither improper nor impossible, but immensely difficult. This assessment in no way makes the life of the parish priest somehow inferior to that of the monk. Both are called to the same ascetical program, but in different degrees. The tradition simply recognizes that each must put this program into effect in the real world he inhabits. Each must rely on the other to supply that kind of holiness in the other's own life that he cannot produce in his own. The Church needs both the holiness of marriage and the holiness of radical celibacy in equal measure.

To underline this, the canonical tradition of the Eastern Churches even encourages married couples to regulate their sexual appetites by fasting from conjugal relations before Holy Communion, for example, and during Lent. This makes it clear in the most practical way imaginable that both monk and married person are engaged together in the same ascetical labor.

For various historical reasons the insights of the Eastern Christian experience have been mostly ignored in the Western Church (and, consequently, by

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the Eastern Catholic Churches who have found themselves in the West). Celibacy in the West is not seen as related primarily to monasticism, but rather to priesthood in general. Nevertheless, it is possible for the West to draw some useful lessons from the Eastern viewpoint.

Unless all Christians accept their vocation to live the asceticism of celibacy within their own lives it is pointless to expect a small group of "elite" Christians to live up to this ideal. Not only is it psychologically difficult to expect one group of men to do this, it is also extremely bad theology. Celibacy is a common calling, expressing the faith of the Church in the coming Kingdom. It will only be possible for this faith to be lived in its most radical way if this life is deeply understood and valued by the wider community.

To be blunt: it is both psychologically dangerous and theologically illiterate for a Christian community that values sexual "freedom," including sex outside of marriage, adultery, abortion, and the contraceptive mentality, to then demand an entirely different sexual standard from its priests. Priests do not become celibate merely because they feel a personal call to a life of sacrifice—at least, they ought not. Priests accept celibacy because they lead a community that is as a whole committed to the ascetic discipline necessary to transfigure human sexuality into an experience of the divine. Celibacy is healthy when it is regarded as a common labor in which each Christian has a share.

Seen in this way, priests will find their commitment to celibacy valued, understood, and supported. Celibacy will thus become a point of communion between priest and congregation. Seen in any other way, priests will always feel that this commitment sets them apart from the people they serve. Far from being a source of communion, celibacy will become a psychological burden and a source of loneliness.

It is also difficult to see how celibacy can be lived at any level in the Church if it remains cut off from its ascetical source. As long as the model for Christian life remains legalistic rather than ascetical the situation looks hopeless. Asceticism, as we have seen, is the recognition that everything we see and touch is mystically redolent with unseen and ineffable Divinity. Celibacy should not be undertaken because it is a legal requirement, but because the celibate is ready to encounter the Mystery that lies beneath his sexuality and yearns, through the liberating discipline of asceticism, to live on this mystical level.

This will only happen when that same person realizes that these same principles must equally apply to every other aspect of human life and experience as well. It is only when with the eyes of faith a person is open to the presence of God within all things that he will see Him in so central a part of his identity as his sexuality. In other words, a person who is not trained to see Eternity in time, nor the Feast in food, nor the Kingdom in possessions will not be trained to see the Mystery in sexuality. A person who is not an ascetic in small things will not be given the grace of divine vision in greater. "He who despises small things will fail little by little" (Sirach 19:1).

An essential part of the genius of the Eastern Churches is that they have always fostered a culture of asceticism. Long and elaborate services, a discipline of intense fasts and bright feasts, every kind of authentic self-denial can be found encouraged and celebrated within the liturgical, theological, and spiritual patrimony of Eastern Christians. Within this ascetical culture celibacy makes sense, both as a communal task and as a personal endeavor. Outside of this culture, celibacy seems like all other merely legal requirements: arbitrary and without meaning.

There is therefore something deeply tragic in the way the contemporary Church has gradually stripped itself of much of its traditional asceticism, leaving only a few craggy remnants of this vanished culture silhouetted against the sky. Of these lonely remains, surely the most incongruous is clerical celibacy. Until the Church restores the supporting superstructure of her ascetical tradition, clerical celibacy will remain a fundamentally meaningless and even dangerous relic of a past long gone.

It is only because of the loss of this general ecclesial culture that the loss of the more specific clerical culture is so serious. Clergy are less and less distinguishable by their dress, their way of life, how they speak, and how they relate to one another and the hierarchy. Almost certainly the same was true of the early Church, and even to some extent the Church of the patristic era. The difference was that in those days what set the Church apart from the world was its own distinctive ascetical and mystical ethos. Can we not do more to recover this ethos today?

In short, the laity cannot justly complain that their priests do not keep the law of celibacy while at the same time demanding that they themselves be subject to no ascetic discipline. Until the laity begins to accept the need to fast, to be mindful of what we wear, how we speak, how we relate to each other—in short, until the laity accepts its baptismal vocation in all its radical other-worldliness—there is no hope that the clergy will find the strength to do so. Only a Church of mystics can realistically expect their clergy to be saints.

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Abortion in the Tides of Culture

Frederica Mathewes-Green

Where did the pro-life movement go? A half-dozen years ago movement activists were everywhere, drafting statements, holding press conferences, staring fixedly into the blind lens of a remote-studio TV camera. But a tide of silence has gradually come in. Abortion, which had defined "hot issue" for our time, mysteriously cooled off. Magazine cover stories have moved on to other topics; college students no longer crowd into abortion debates.

What happened? Did we all just decide to forget our differences and get along?

No, it's more like we got bored. Not pro-life activists, who are as hardworking as ever, but the general public. It seemed to them like everything possible to say about abortion had already been said. In a sound-bite age, neither side was allowed to say very much; the pro-life message was condensed to "It's a baby!" while pro-choicers insisted that "It's a woman's choice!" These two arguments do not engage each other, but are locked in a futile clinch, punching ineffectively. After a few dozen years, no wonder the public's attention drifted. Ever-sensitive media forces politely took the cue and ceased giving space to the abortion issue. The debate was over.

But if the debate is over, the cause is not. Abortion remains as much a tragedy as ever, but pro-life activists now face the frustrating task of trying to rekindle heat in a fire that has gone cold. An October 2000 issue of *Newsweek* demonstrated the problem bluntly. A six-page spread compared the stands of candidates Bush and Gore on a series of important issues: the environment, education, foreign relations, and taxes. There was no mention of abortion.

Pro-lifers may well resent this treatment, and suspect that the all-powerful media have deliberately squelched their voices. But the development is less an initiative of the media than a response. Public interest simply shifts with time. Seasons turn, opinions change, interests wane, and issues that seemed urgent retreat to the background. Each change is subtle, but by the end of the week it may be absolute. Media professionals are as influenced by these changes as we are, and exquisitely sensitive to losing the public ear.

This kind of change is subtle, and hard to detect while it's in process. The themes of an age are always invisible to its inhabitants, and become obvious only in retrospect. But we can get an idea of how the process works by time-traveling to observe a similar change in a previous generation. If we look at old movies, for example, we can see attitudes that filmmakers and audiences once shared that are foreign to us now. Some assumptions prevalent in a classic film of the 1930s would never play today.

Readers might presume I'm talking about positive family values that are currently passé. No, I mean the reverse: our great-grandparents embraced some values that today we readily recognize as negative and damaging. These attitudes were broadly accepted and celebrated in popular entertainment, much as reckless sexual ideas are today, yet over time they were gradually exposed, discredited, and discarded.

There is hope here. What pro-lifers have not been able to accomplish through a head-on attack may eventually take place anyway, thanks to humanity's self-protecting tilt toward health. Sometimes positive change occurs due to an intentional campaign for moral reform, but more often it's due to a gradual realization that certain things that looked like fun actually hurt. Sexual promiscuity, abortion, divorce, disease, and shattered families hurt a great deal, as had been obvious to our ancestors for millennia. The hope that the current situation is a bizarre blip, that sanity could return as slowly and completely as the tide, is a fully reasonable one.

One of my favorite films is *It Happened One Night*, a 1934 comedy that deservedly received five Oscars. It's a delightful story with quirky characters, and a cast expertly led by Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert. But when Gable first appears on-screen, roaring drunk and telling off his boss over a pay phone, we wince. Though this is clearly meant to introduce him as a fun-loving charmer, alcoholism just isn't funny to us. But to audiences of the thirties it was terrifically amusing to watch big stars act drunk—that is, not just sipping a little wine, but belting serious booze to the point of stumbling and bellowing. When Gable appears late in the film heartbroken and angry, his boss responds by sympathetically giving him funds to get plastered and then adds, "When you sober up, come in and talk to me." At the time, that seemed the appropriate thing to do.

It Happened One Night isn't unusual in this regard. In the *Thin Man* movies, and in nearly every other "sophisticated" comedy of the thirties, drunkenness is a mark of distinction. People who disapproved of drinking were prissy and stuck-up; drunks were cool. Chronic alcoholics with hidden flasks were funny. Hangovers were funny. The pretty leading lady moaning with an ice pack on her forehead was funny. Even the terrifying hallucinations of a toxic drunk were funny. Adult pro-drunkenness culture was so entrenched that it seemed normal, appropriate, to show a baby elephant undergo-

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ing horrible d.t.'s in Disney's 1941 *Dumbo*. Most children find the "Pink Elephants on Parade" sequence terrifying, but to adults of the time it was witty.

Replace "drunkenness" with "sex" in those paragraphs and you see a similar pattern. Today it is sex that the general culture finds endlessly amusing. Sex is the emblem of coolness. Anyone who opposes open-season sexuality is prissy and stuck-up; aggressive sexual athletes are cool. We likewise get a kick out of including children in the joke, seeing kids on sitcoms ask sexually loaded questions or deliver double entendres. We act like we just discovered sex, and any resistance, even in the name of taste, is hooted down. This rebellious enthusiasm is extremely difficult to counter, as temperance advocates could have told us.

What '30s drunkenness and contemporary free sex have in common is backlash, rebellion against a prior standard. That's why both have such an immature or adolescent tone. The free sex movement of the late sixties thought it was overthrowing the uptight, repressed sexuality of the 1950s; adults who resented Prohibition in the twenties, and celebrated its 1933 repeal, had a similar liberationist mindset.

There are ironies in the cultural parallels, though. In the previous cycle, the moralizing meddlers were progressives and feminists. Prohibition was championed by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), an organization that also promoted women's suffrage as well as prison and workplace reform. These early feminists perceived that male drunkenness was a persistent hardship for women, accompanied as it often was by violence, job loss, and poverty. The Eighteenth Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcohol, was ratified in 1919; the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote, came a year later. But during the Roaring Twenties sneaking alcohol became glamorous and daring; my grandmother used to describe how a friend smuggled champagne to her 1924 wedding by sleeping on the bottles in his Pullman train berth. It was, we would say today, a transgressive act. It took another Amendment, the Twenty-First, ratified in 1933, to restore the supposed right to drink, and by that time headlong defiance had canonized excess.

"Drunks are cool" is one example of a bad value that was gradually replaced by something healthier. This process took a very long time. We could mark the beginning in the tipsy Roaring Twenties, and the end with the criticism *Arthur* received in 1981 for treating alcoholism as funny. That's nearly sixty years. Abortion has been legal for thirty years. It's not time to lose hope.

But note that the public attitude toward drunkenness was not changed by a revived anti-drinking moral crusade. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union did not finally develop the magic-bullet slogan that would "change hearts and minds." The WCTU in fact faded away, an organization that in the public mind was peopled by biddies and fools. Pro-life leaders likewise may never gain public admiration, never cook up that smash ad campaign that makes our cause fashionable at last.

In the meantime, of course, we can't stop trying; we must continue to present the truth with the persistence of a tympanist in a symphony. We have to keep showing up, speaking, writing, doing the right thing, reaching at least "those who have ears to hear." But public approval or admiration may never be our reward. We may have to settle for being despised and rejected, just like Someone told us we would be—Someone who told us that persecution is, paradoxically, a blessing. Nothing is as spiritually transforming as being humbled, though it's certainly not the blessing we want to seek.

The WCTU did not succeed; instead, the truth itself, which its adherents had perceived, succeeded. Today partygoers are not embarrassed to request a glass of water, not wine. A guest who downed a quick series of Scotch doubles, in the old manner, would be the object of frowns and whispers. Excessive drinking is cool to nobody over the age of eighteen. What once was sophisticated now looks juvenile and self-destructive. And some day, God willing, irresponsible sex and its handmaiden, abortion, will look the same to our descendants. It may only take time for that truth to shine through.

That future time will not be perfect. Our grandchildren will have different ills to combat, ills which we cannot now imagine. It's instructive to watch old movies with open eyes, and see the myth of a "pro-family" golden age crumble. Yes, characters waited until marriage to have sex, but women were routinely slapped and physically degraded; Jimmy Cagney started that fashion in *Public Enemy* (1931) when he shoved a half grapefruit into girlfriend Mae Clarke's face. In *It Happened One Night*, Gable threatens to break Colbert's neck, and later tells her screen dad, "What she needs is a guy that would take a sock at her once a day, whether it's coming to her or not." We may be shaky in our notions of what constitutes a "lady," but we have much healthier ideas about how a lady should be treated.

Likewise, you don't have to watch many films of the era to notice that male adultery is treated lightly, as a boys-will-be-boys inevitability that women should smilingly ignore. Wives who complain are charged with destroying their marriages for the sake of foolish pride, as in *The Women* (1939). (The very clever script is by a woman, Claire Boothe Luce; modern-day feminists would no doubt term that an instance of "internalized oppression.") In *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), it's Katherine Hepburn's fault that her dad is flirting with a dancer; she failed to give him all the admiration a dad needs from a daughter, and the poor man was compelled to seek it elsewhere. We may have elastic notions

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about premarital sex, but our view of extramarital sex is comparatively judgmental.

The last time you saw abortion considered in a film or TV show, it was probably framed as the sad, noble decision of a suffering woman who was being unjustly persecuted by violent right-wing zealots. Lately, we're not hearing much about the issue at all. That's not necessarily a bad thing; silence is a good medium for reflection. When the topic reemerges—and it is impossible for something so painful to remain hidden—the story may well have a different twist. For the time being we must persevere with patience, and wait for the tide to turn.

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A Musical Requiem

Michael Linton

Timing is everything. To complete his three-year tenure as composer-in-residence with the Pacific Symphony (an ensemble in Orange County, California), Richard Danielpour planned to write a large choral work dedicated to American veterans. The premiere was scheduled for November 2001, and Danielpour received scores to inspect the morning of September 11. Wishing also to memorialize that event, he retooled the dedication to include the terrorist victims. The work was recorded soon after its November performance, and the resulting CD—*An American Requiem* (Reference Recordings)—was rushed for release in January 2002. The piece (or at least its timely dedication) is thus one of the first commemorations of that horrible September day, beating Bruce Springsteen's *The Rising* by six months and the New York Philharmonic's commission of John Adams' "official" commemoration by a year.

Of course, Danielpour's music really isn't about September 11. But it has been marketed that way, which makes some sense. For the fact is that "classical" music is currently in a marketing crisis. The ranks of its old supporters are dwindling. Baby boomers, or those folks who David Brooks has dubbed "bourgeois bohemians" (bobos), have been raised on rock, television, and easy listening muzak—genres that generally do not cultivate the skills required to understand the music of the Western art tradition. While operas continue to flourish, attendance is shrinking at symphony orchestras, while outside of a few cities recital series have vanished almost entirely.

With reduced audiences, the organizations of our classical music culture are finding themselves financially threatened. The situation is most dire for some smaller regional orchestras. According to the *Miami Herald*, the Florida Philharmonic ended its 2001-2002 fiscal year almost three million dollars in debt. The St. Louis Symphony, one of the most successful and critically acclaimed American orchestras in the 1970s and '80s, has been forced to draw so heavily on its endowment that its future is in question. Even the mighty New York Philharmonic's management decided it had either to postpone or curtail several of its events planned for the 2002-2003 season.

Some orchestras are trying to recapture audiences by changing their formats, schedules, and even clothes. "Pop" events are now sometimes more frequent than the classical concerts the ensembles were created to perform. (Amy Grant is known as the "savior" of the Nashville Symphony, for example, because of the Christmas concerts she gives with the orchestra.) In England, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic has hired a marketing research firm to find out what audiences want the orchestra to wear. Thinking that the traditional white tie and tails are out, the orchestra looks forward to hiring a fashion designer to provide the ensemble with a "new, instantly recognizable image."

Radio stations formatted to classical music are also in trouble. Several private stations have been sold, their new owners replacing the old play lists with a variety of more profitable formats. Public radio stations were once the most important—often the only—source for classical music in many communities. Yet even here stations have either significantly curtailed their presentation of classical music or have abandoned it outright for a variety of "talk" formats. Stations that do retain a classical music format generally limit pieces to be broadcast to shorter works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (which pretty much condemns listeners to a purgatory of Vivaldi concerto movements).

Publishers and recording companies are also feeling the pinch. There is little money to be made on Beethoven, whose works are public domain. But publishers will soon be impoverished as the works of Puccini, Richard Strauss, Britten, Stravinsky, and even Copland—royalties from which sustain their firms—also become public property. Classical music has long been a minuscule part of the business of recorded music. Today that market share is even tinier. And even among listeners who do value this music, how many recordings of a Mozart symphony or even a *Rite of Spring* does one need?

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Orchestras need audiences, radio stations need listeners, publishers need new materials to copyright and record companies new works to distribute. And as any Wal-Mart manager knows, if the customers don't like your product, you don't change customers, you change the product.

Hence the importance of Danielpour. His music is a perfect product for an audience of bobos. Like the professional model Viking range in the bobo's kitchen, it gives the appearance of substance and sophistication without any of its requirements—or mess. His orchestration is always facile, his melodies pleasantly lyric, his harmonies only slightly more acidic than those of John Williams, and his works are only rarely handicapped by originality.

And the bobos love it. Eager to cash in on his populism, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh and San Francisco Symphonies have all commissioned major works from him, as have Jessye Norman, Yo-Yo Ma, and Dawn Upshaw. His forty-two published works receive hundreds of performances every year and *An American Requiem* is his thirteenth major work to be released on CD—which isn't bad for a composer who is just forty-six.

The *Requiem* is vintage Danielpour. The composer makes no bones about the fact that his music is largely derivative, and it's easy to tick off the passages in the *Requiem* where he draws on the work of other composers: Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Britten's *Peter Grimes*, or even Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. This isn't to say the music is bad. Danielpour is a skillful imitator and in at least one mezzo-soprano and tenor duet he rises above imitation to approach music that has some real individuality and power.

But such moments in this hour-long work are the exception. The *American Requiem* isn't bad, and it's not even uninteresting. It's just trivial and overblown. The problem lies perhaps not so much in Danielpour's pawnshop music as in his choice and use of texts.

The model for Danielpour's work is Benjamin Britten's 1962 *War Requiem*. In that work, Britten interpolated poems by Wilfred Owen between movements of the Latin rite to create a sharply hewn indictment of the barbarism of war. In a similar way, Danielpour takes parts of the Mass for the dead and the first responsary of the burial service and interpolates between and within them poems by Hilda Doolittle, Whitman, Emerson, Michael Harper, and an anonymous writer of a spiritual.

Although Danielpour's list of poets is marvelously inclusive (one bisexual woman, one gay white man, a token straight dead white male, one straight black man, and a "nobody" speaking for the countless masses of the disenfranchised unknown), the different voices of the poets together do not always make sense. His use of the liturgical texts is jejune. Sometimes the relationship between them and the poetry that interrupts them is strained and superficially considered (for instance, I doubt that Danielpour intended the strongly anti-gay message created by his following of Whitman's homoerotic "O my soldiers, my heart gives you love" with the "Confutatis maledictis, flammis acribus addictis" of the *Dies irae*). The Latin texts also seem oddly rootless and nonreferential. Of course it's the composer's right to use them this way if he chooses, but if the Latin texts are not in some way to remind the listener of both their antiquity and their liturgical significance it is peculiar to use them at all.

All of these problems contribute to the work's lack of focus. Although the high irony of Britten being able to write a pacifist manifesto only because so many thousands of Britons died to protect him from fascism wasn't missed in 1962 (or even unacknowledged by Britten himself), his antiwar convictions were real and keenly argued in his art. Britten was deeply concerned about basic issues of good and evil. And there was no ambiguity about his passion for those themes in his art. Danielpour may very well be equally passionate, but his work fails to suggest it. Instead of conviction, Danielpour gives us facile banalities that ultimately make his work seem trivial.

But trivial is just fine for bobos—and the orchestras and recording companies and publishers who go out of their way to please them. Once again: Danielpour's music isn't bad. His *Requiem* is pleasant, consistently well made, and occasionally tuneful. Listen to *An American Requiem*, but just don't expect either artistic vision or compositional courage. It's harmless. It makes you feel like a savant. And it will probably sell just fine.

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To Beginning Law Students

Patrick McKinley Brennan

Regardless of what each of you has come to law school to do, allow me to suggest a complementary or perhaps an alternative aspiration: take these three years to learn how to do law well; even more, learn that the point of doing law well is to do good; still more, learn that doing good through law is about using power

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to achieve love's ends. "The central problem of the legal enterprise," Judge John Noonan has suggested, "is the relation of love to power." Rather than of love, we could talk today about this or that, just as we can use the power of law for this or that, for good or for evil, for life or for death. Let us, rather, talk and think about what place law has in love and love has in law.

The typical method by which American law schools invite their students to begin (as we say) "thinking like lawyers" is the reading of appellate court opinions. You will read dozens, perhaps hundreds, of appellate decisions during your first year, and one of the questions you will be asked of them is: What is the law? What is the law of this case? Another is: Does the court claim to base its decision, its holding, in discernible legal materials, or was this, in the court's eyes, a case of "first impression" in which there was, in effect, no law at all?

Law, it seems, is not always there when you look for it. Sometimes, even in the judicial opinions of self-styled conservative jurists, law must be made. The result is that you will soon find yourself admitting under professorial cross-examination that the court based its decision not on law (because there was none "on point") but instead on something else. That something is called "policy grounds." The habit of mind of a large segment of the modern legal academy is, I regret to report, to treat the apex of your education in law as the realization that what looks like "law" is instead "law and policy." It is against this tendency that I would like to inoculate you. I doubt I shall succeed, but there is too much at stake to allow the possibility of failure to dissuade me.

What legislatures and courts proffer in the name of the law is so plentiful today that we easily forget that the quantity of law has nothing to do with its quality. However clever a statute or "policy," the mere fact that a law has been enacted is no guarantee that it will make any contribution to our leading good lives. Law almost by definition succeeds in ordering our living, but order is not all there is and may not be for the good. As the late Yale Professor Grant Gilmore put it: "In hell there will be nothing but law and due process will be meticulously observed."

But if law is not just a system of ordering indifferent to what goods we pursue in life, then, as lawyers, we need to determine what is truly good. There is, of course, a long history of disagreement on the issue. So much disagreement, in fact, that in the name of avoiding discord we have been asked, or rather ordered, by much of modern political and legal theory to leave our aspirations for the good at the threshold of law and politics. In its place, we are instructed to let policy, that trusty tool of the objective experts, get the job done uncomplicatedly and uncontroversially.

Yet when a person is denied a seat at the front of the bus based on the color of her skin, when a pregnant woman is deported without consideration to where she is being returned, when an executioner puts an innocent person to death in the name of justice and the people—we know that this is the antithesis of the good, and we know this because with our pre-theoretical intelligence we grasp what *is* good.

Now you will not hear much about the good in your law school classes, and to some extent this is as it should be. But you will hear a lot about the importance of doing work *pro bono publico*—that is, "for the public good." This is something the American Bar Association (ABA) tells every American lawyer he should perform, and this law school is committed, as it should be, to encouraging such work as well.

Now the ABA defines *pro bono* work broadly as any free legal service toward any public good, or, more narrowly, as free legal services for those in need of them. Without telling us why, the ABA favors the latter, narrower definition. Work *pro bono publico* then turns out to mean free legal services for poor people, something to which, according to the ABA, every lawyer should dedicate at least fifty hours annually. The rest of the lawyer's professional life should then be guided by the ABA's ideal of the lawyer as "zealous advocate," with, apparently, no concern for the good at all.

Zeal is not, I suppose, an unmitigated evil. But like order, I suspect there is plenty of it in hell (a point not lost on Dante). Nor, of course, am I knocking free legal services for the poor; I entertain no doubt that well-chosen legal services provided to the needy would make the world a better place. But I do have grave reservations about a legal profession that believes it can sustain itself while advocating that lawyers spend a mere fifty hours a year working for the public good—while acting as little more than hired guns the rest of the time. In a particularly pernicious and seductive sleight of hand, the ABA presupposes that paid work cannot be *pro bono*. This would have come as a great and dispiriting shock to this country's great lawyers of earlier generations, who considered all of their work to serve a higher good.

But there is no reason to despair. If only they would learn again to think of law as a reflection or expression of the public good, then lawyers could act once again as civil leaders.

Of course there will always be disagreement about the content of the good. Even the American founders disagreed among themselves. But they bothered to disagree because they *cared* enough to seek the good. Law school will be for you, I hope, a focused opportunity to discover or rediscover how people in community go about figuring out what is good. As theologian James Tunstead Burtchaell explains, "Our judgments of good and evil focus on whether a certain course of action will make a human being grow, and mature, and flourish, or

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whether it will make a person withered, estranged, and indifferent. In making our evaluations, we have little to draw on except our own and our forebears' experience, and whatever wisdom we can wring from our debate with others."

The effort required will be great. It is not easy to pay attention to experience, to be intelligent in interpreting what you experience, to be reasonable in the judgments you reach, to be responsible about acting only in ways consistent with what you know. Throughout the process, do not lose sight of the fact that, although law is a specialized dialect, a technical language in which you are to become expert, at the end of the day law governs the domain of common sense, the quotidian issues about what is worth doing, what risks should be permitted, what harms must be avoided. Pay attention to your common sense, but let it be tested through dialogue. Genuine engagement in the process of learning from and with others will require you to be ready to change. Be ready to change for the good.

We have spoken of law and of the good, which brings us finally to love. What is done in the name of the law is done with great power behind it—the army or a firing squad if necessary. Law that would give effect to the good as understood by a diverse population would be very good indeed, or so I have been suggesting. But things are perhaps not so simple. Might it not be the case that law, even law that aims at the good, is itself an evil? While the Jewish people live under God's law, and their possession of it is their boast and pride, indeed their salvation, the Christian people, by contrast, "died to the law through the body of Christ" (Romans 7:4). To the Galatians Paul wrote, "All who rely on works of law are under a curse" (Galatians 3:10).

Yet it is important to keep in mind that Christ considered himself to be fulfilling the law, not supplanting it. People who would love one another still need law, at least in this life. But while love may lie beyond law, law worth living under does some of love's bidding. As Michigan professor Joseph Vining has noted, law that is worth living under, like the love that informs it, "leaves nothing out" in its effort to make sense of our experience: "not person, nor present, nor freedom, nor will, nor madness, nor the individual, nor the delight of a child, nor the eyes of a fellow human being, nor our sense of the ultimate."

Welcome to law school. And if intellectually and morally you would make the most of your experience here, remember along the way to leave nothing out.

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Halfway Through the Hail Mary

Randy Boyagoda

A Methodist friend of mine has always been puzzled by the emphasis Catholics place upon ready-made prayers. She considers recourse to the Hail Mary to be little more than prayer on autopilot, the rote droning of words learned and memorized as children. How, she wonders, can it possibly produce an intense and focused spiritual experience? Self-sprung prayers, on the other hand, she views as genuine evidence of a willed act to commune with God, relying upon individual creative and expressive abilities.

My casual response has always been to mention precisely *where* we first find the Hail Mary. It is the form of address the Angel Gabriel uses when he informs Mary that she is to be the Mother of God. As creative and expressive as I may be, the words of God's appointed angelic messenger, conveyed to us through sacred Scripture and written by way of Divine Revelation, have always struck me as possessing a certain perfection that I could hardly outdo. And yet, on more frequent occasions of recitation than I'd like, I must admit to lacking the fervor that can overcome me when I remember I am speaking holy words. Too easily, I neglect to be thankful and reverent for the awesome power explicitly granted by God to His people by allowing us to share the greatest of the angels' unending hymns of praise.

The literary critic Harold Bloom once explained that after a career's worth of reading and analyzing Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a single, focused reading one evening brought the work back to life, recast its meaning in a wonderfully vital and revealing way. My adult understanding of the Hail Mary derives from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and from the opening of Luke's Gospel, where we find the words that together comprise the main substance of the prayer. First, Gabriel's address, "Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favor! The Lord is with you"; second, Elizabeth's praise of her cousin, "Of all women, you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:28,42). Recently, I have taken to reciting the prayer with slow and deliberate care, mindful of Bloom's example and the *Catechism*'s assertion that "Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse. . . . Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray" (§2650). In learning how to pray the Hail Mary, I have come to a most surprising, most joyous realization: its greatness is not its words, but its silence, a moment of pause integral

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to its meaning as a prayer, and, moreover, to our meaning as human beings.

Mine is a strong contention, I know, and to explain it, I ask you to poke around the cobwebbed recesses of your mind, back to your high school days. Tucked just behind the Pythagorean theorem and beneath the state capital of Florida, you will find a term from English class: the "turn." When it comes to rote memorization and mindless droning, is there any set of formulas that more deserved such a treatment than the terminology we learned while studying poetry? Alliteration, assonance, simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, iambic pentameter, quatrain, and, most pointless of all, the turn. When we read a sonnet of Shakespeare's and the last two lines were apparently markedly different from the first twelve, our teachers taught us that a sudden change in the poem's idea structure and argument transpired in the space between lines twelve and thirteen. It always seemed an easy way out of explanation to me, or, more often, a less than sudden or exciting change. For example, as Shakespeare's famous Sonnet XVIII nears its end and we are unsure of how the speaker's love will overcome death or how "in eternal lines to time [she will grow]," there occurs a tiny typographical indentation and line space. After which, we read: "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee." Ah, the turn. So what?

The value of this seemingly insignificant literary term came to me during my recent recitations of the Hail Mary, when I began to think of it as a poem. Understanding God's work in a literary context is a centuries-old practice. In a 1622 sermon at St. Paul's, for instance, John Donne described "the Holy Ghost [as] an eloquent Author, a vehement and abundant Author, but yet not luxuriant; he is far from a penurious, but as far from a superfluous style too." And since the medieval period, as George Steiner eloquently explains in his recent *Grammars of Creation*, there has existed an oft-changing relation of human author to Divine Author, of the human creator of literature to the Divine Creator of all.

The Hail Mary suddenly seemed a poem to me when I noticed the pause that we always include halfway through the prayer, after the words "thy womb, Jesus" and before continuing with "Holy Mary, Mother of God." When recited communally, the Hail Mary's pause is usually the moment where the gathered join the leader in prayer, in part signifying our human response to the Divine words that comprise the first half. According to popular legend surrounding the prayer, its second half also replicates the joyous cries of villagers who witnessed Mary's assumption into heaven. Thus is explained the rationale for the pause during group prayer. And yet, even when I recite the prayer privately, I include the pause. I imagine we all do. With that pause in mind, the prayer can be seen, spoken, and heard as a poem.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with Thee.
Blessed are thou amongst women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners now,
And at the hour of our death.
Amen.

What happens in the space, that moment's breath we take before continuing the prayer? The lines of the prayer itself, understood in poetic terms, provide us with the answer: the turn that occurs in the Hail Mary signifies the birth of Christ. Consider the time sequence at work within the prayer. "During" the second half of Elizabeth's blessing, "blessed is the fruit of thy womb," Mary is pregnant with Jesus. When we pray the next line, Mary is holy because *now* she is the Mother of God. The moment in between constitutes the most important change in the human narrative; it registers the greatest event in history, when God took human form and redeemed us.

Because I now study and teach literature as a profession, I am constantly on guard against the dangerous fallacy of imposing my personal meaning onto a literary work, let alone onto the words of an angel sent by God to herald the birth of His Son, savior of the world. And yet, thinking of the Hail Mary in literary terms, I realized that no imposition was occurring; rather, the prayer includes this logic within it. When I teach poetry to my students, I ask them constantly to search the poem for moments of "self-demonstration," where the poet has been able to convey meaning through phrases or structures that demonstrate the very idea they describe. If we are reading the words of an Author, not an author, this self-demonstration attains an altogether greater significance, which in turn reminds us of its greatest: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

The reality of which John writes I found in the Hail Mary, in a pause without words precisely because in that space and time the Word has become flesh. After a lifetime's worth of recitations, that prayer remains alive because of its internal, sacred energies, collected together and ritualized into a formal prayer that Catholics have prayed together and alone for centuries. No matter how fine a turn of phrase I may devise on my own to express myself to God, there will always exist the greater version in the Hail Mary: Christ's turn.

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Orestes Brownson and the Truth About America

Peter Augustine Lawler

If you attend Mass in the crypt of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame, you may be startled to notice, as you walk up to take communion, that your steps take you directly over the final resting place of Orestes A. Brownson (1803-1876). The fact that Notre Dame makes little or no effort to direct visitors to his tomb reflects the neglect into which Brownson, almost certainly the greatest American Catholic thinker of the nineteenth century, has fallen. Although he has on rare occasions attracted the attention of some leading modern intellectuals, including Christopher Lasch, Russell Kirk, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Brownson is now all but forgotten. This fate is undeserved: Brownson possessed an acute and prescient mind, and his profound reflections on the relation between democratic politics and Christianity have much to teach us today. The reappearance of Brownson's classic volume, *The American Republic*, and the scheduled publication of four more volumes of his works in political philosophy, provides an opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with his thought.

Orestes Brownson was born in Vermont and into poverty. At a young age he moved with his family to Saratoga County, New York. There he was largely self-educated, but he still managed to memorize almost all of the Bible by the age of fourteen. For most of his youth he was an ardent and restless seeker after truth, never attaching himself for long to any one spiritual or political position. By the time of his conversion to Catholicism in 1844, Brownson had been a Presbyterian, a minister in both the Universalist and Unitarian churches, a Transcendentalist, a militant atheist, and a devotee of the form of secular, utopian socialism taught by Robert Owen and Fanny Wright. He worked as a humanitarian political activist, belonged to the New York Workingman's Party, and took to denouncing laissez-faire capitalism as worse than medieval serfdom. Through all his religious and political peregrinations, Brownson wrote prolifically, and, especially prior to his journey to Rome, he was considered one of the leading thinkers in America.

For the young Brownson, orthodox Christianity held little appeal because of its teaching about man's alienation from God. Brownson insisted on identifying the voice of God with the voice of humanity, and he taught that the kingdom of God—which would be perfectly just and free of all oppression—could be established on earth. Almost a decade before the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, Brownson's essay "The Laboring Classes" predicted the inevitability of class warfare ending in the advent of heaven on earth.

Brownson did not consider himself a revolutionary, however. As Gregory Butler explains in his fine study of Brownson's ideas (*In Search of the American Spirit: The Political Thought of Orestes Brownson*, 1992), Brownson understood his writing to be an "outgrowth of the American tradition." Moreover, "he thought he saw in the American Constitution the germ of the new, perfected organization of mankind." For Brownson, the Jacksonian Democratic party could serve as a vehicle for realizing his ideals, and he made an active effort to direct that party's thought. He even became "President Martin Van Buren's man in Massachusetts" and accepted a patronage job from the government.

Yet these hopes were thoroughly dashed by the presidential election of 1840. The consensus then and now is that Brownson's "The Laboring Classes," which Van Buren's Whig opponents used to charge that the Demo-

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crats intended to abolish the wage system, contributed to Van Buren's failure to win reelection. Brownson's uncritical, progressive faith in democracy never recovered. Soon he would describe himself "a conservative in politics." It was a political conversion that served as a prelude to his rapid advance toward religious orthodoxy.

Over the next few years, Brownson would conclude that man's progress in history depends on his communion with, and the continuous action of, a Creator. He also concluded that belief in supernatural revelation and creation was not as incompatible with reason as he had once supposed. Before long, Brownson had decided to convert to Roman Catholicism and was received into the Church by Bishop John B. Fitzpatrick of Boston in 1844.

The American Republic (1866) is Brownson's most comprehensive work of political reflection—which means that it is about much more than politics narrowly understood. Republican—or distinctively and properly political—life cannot be understood simply on its own terms, Brownson argued. It must be placed in the broader context of human life as a whole and its proper relation to the truth about the whole of God's creation.

This cluster of assumptions makes Brownson's work somewhat unique in the history of political thought. Plato and Aristotle, for example, distinguished between the love of wisdom that animates the few and the lies or conventions that characterize political life. They were not opposed to deception when writing for a political audience, and they wondered inconclusively about whether the gods or nature really supported moral aspirations. In contrast, the modern political thinkers who are most influenced by Machiavelli tend to connect truth to effectiveness. They are, in other words, pragmatists. For them, the truth is what enables us to change the world; it is not something to be discovered, but something to be made. As that most radical and influential of pragmatists, Karl Marx, famously wrote, the point of philosophy is not to understand the world, but to transform it.

Later modern thinkers, those influenced by Pascal and Nietzsche, take a darker view of man's relationship to truth. Convinced that Machiavellianism cannot succeed in completely remaking the world, they believe that, in the end, the pragmatic project is an ineffective diversion from the terrible truth—the meaninglessness—that underlies all human projects. We thus have little choice but to face up to the fact that our deepest longings for knowing and loving cannot be satisfied. Only our courage, not our knowledge, can keep us from despair.

Against all of these views, Christian thought proposes something very different: namely, that human beings have been made to know the truth, and that the truth is fundamentally Good News. Brownson should grab our attention, then, because he adopts a philosophic stance on political life that is neither pragmatic nor existentialist. And neither does he point back to Greece in an effort to bypass the Christians, as many twentieth-century political theorists have done. Rather, in a broadly Thomistic way, he views natural reason and supernatural theology as complementary human goods—and he rejects the easy dichotomies that permeate so much of the history of political philosophy. We need not choose Athens *or* Jerusalem, rational self-sufficiency *or* humble submission to authority. We ought to follow reason, but we ought also to recognize its limits—and what those limits imply about the centrality of revelation. As Brownson writes, "Let philosophy go as far as it can, but let the philosopher never for a moment imagine that human reason will ever be able to understand itself." Most crucially, the philosopher will never be able to answer, through reason alone, the most pressing question of all: Why did rational, finite beings come into existence in the first place?

We could not have figured out simply by using reason and analyzing the natural facts available to us that the world was, and continues to be, created by a providential God. But once we learn of this fact through revelation, we know that it is the most reasonable account of the origin and perpetuation of all things. Theology thus aids human reason in making sense of the facts it perceives about nature: "In this sense, tradition, both as to the natural and as to the supernatural, renders an important service in the development of reason, and in conducting us to philosophic truth." Biblical revelation in general and Christianity in particular are indispensable for philosophy's development. The dogmatic denial of the possibility of the truth of revelation leads to philosophical shipwreck (as the self-destructive history of philosophy in the twentieth century so clearly demonstrates). It is for this reason that Brownson distinguishes between two kinds or modes of philosophical reflection: "philosophy in the sense of unbelief and irreligion" and "philosophy in the sense of the rational exercise of the faculty of the human mind on the divine and human things, aided by the light of revelation."

When Brownson turns to politics itself, he draws striking conclusions from his insights into the harmony between reason and revelation. For example, he informs us that it is appropriate to view the influence of Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence on the United States with a degree of ambivalence. While Brownson affirms the political conclusions of the document, he rejects the Jeffersonian or Lockean way of reaching them. It is certainly true, he argues, that "under the law of nature, all men are equal, or have equal rights as men." But the reason that "one man . . .

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can have in himself no right to govern another" is that a "man is never absolutely his own, but always and everywhere belongs to his Creator." That is, we can reasonably affirm that the natural law originates with a Creator, and that we are dependent on Him for all that is and all that we are. It is this affirmation—the virtual antithesis of the Lockean principle of self-ownership—that provides the proper foundation of human equality, or the doctrine that we have "equal rights as men." All governments that truly protect individual rights depend on the assumption that man is not God. Likewise, all despotism originates in the "sophism," "error," and "sin" that in some sense man *is* God. Hence only the Catholic or Thomistic understanding of the relationship between reason and revelation, or nature and the Creator, can make sense of America's founding principles.

Brownson also affirms Aquinas' view that what human beings can know through natural reason is largely available only to "the *elite* of the race." For "the bulk of mankind a revelation is necessary to give them an adequate knowledge even of the precepts of natural law," although "in some men it can be known through reason alone." That is, some men need revelation more than others in order to come to correct conclusions about God and His law. But Brownson rejects the view of the classical philosophers, who hold that a few men do not need revelation at all. The wisest of men, in fact, should most clearly see the need for revelation, because they are most aware of the limits of human reason. Those who know the natural law best should also know best that its origin and legal character are not really explicable without what we know about the Creator through revelation. They know, in particular, that God Himself could not possibly be bound by natural law: "To pretend, as some do, that God is tied up by the so-called laws of nature, or is bound in His free action by them, is to mistake entirely the relation of Creator and creature."

Yet Brownson, despite his acknowledgment of the inequality of men's rational faculties, was convinced that the Catholic Church's defense of the truth in America should proceed mainly by argument. He opposed the Church when it distrusted reason or disparaged science, and he was a critic of the American Catholic education of his time, insofar as it did not make a place for both philosophy and theology. He complained that "we have found no epoch in which the directors of the Catholic world seem to have so great a dread of intellect as our own." To him, the Church seemed animated by "the conviction expressed by Rousseau that 'the man who thinks is a depraved animal.'" In Brownson's own experience, nothing could be further from the truth than the common churchman's conviction that a man must choose between being smart and thoughtful or pious and orthodox.

Christopher Lasch has observed with admiration the extent to which Brownson aimed to provoke argument in America over the truth of religious doctrine. Brownson's concern with that truth led him to attack the insipid idea that an American civil religion that suppressed doctrinal differences should be promulgated. Teaching a vague, general faith that denies the importance of human differences regarding fundamental questions amounts to a form of tyranny. Hence, he saw in the work of Horace Mann—as he would have seen in the pragmatism of John Dewey and Richard Rorty—a thoughtless conformism that privileges comfort and control over truth. Brownson also rejected the deeper Hobbesian doctrine behind pragmatism, which holds that peace is more important than truth and justice. Because he preferred truth to comfort, Brownson's thought is nobly antibourgeois; the people can and should be better than hedonistic middle-class materialists. Like Tocqueville, Brownson understood that metaphysics and theology tend to lose ground in democracies, and he wrote, at least in part, to fend off that degradation in America.

Brownson's insights into the character of American political life have exerted precious little influence. A handful of pre-Vatican II American Catholic scholars, sensing the superiority of his political thought to secular and Protestant liberalism, took him seriously (among them Stanley Parry of the University of Notre Dame). But there have not been many such scholars, and their books and articles are today largely forgotten. None of them had the combination of depth of thought and literary talent required to establish Brownson as a major figure in American political thought—or to locate Brownson in critical relation to the dominant secular, natural-rights, humanitarian, and progressivist tendencies in American thought.

If anything, things became worse after Vatican II, when Brownson almost disappeared from view, even among American Catholic scholars. Only a very few studies since then have taken his claims seriously. Non-Catholic scholars, when they have found something to admire in Brownson, have usually pointed to his passionate devotion to the search for truth and not to what he actually thought he found at the end of that quest. One outstanding exception to this rule was Lasch, who both admired what Brownson had to say about truth being the moral foundation of democracy and applauded his refusal to separate completely politics and religion.

But far more than Lasch, it is Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., who can serve as the best touchstone for understanding Brownson's thought today. Murray, of course, is the author of the classic work of American Catholic political philosophy, *We Hold These Truths.* It

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was Murray, more than anyone else, who was responsible for the character of Vatican II's statement on religious liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*). As far as I know, Murray never acknowledged a debt to Brownson, but the similarities between their thought have been noticed more than once. There exists an obvious and deep intellectual kinship between the two that arguably points to certain core truths about the relationship between Catholicism and the American nation.

Murray, like Brownson, claims that the American founders built better than they knew because they were providentially dependent on the Catholic tradition of natural law. What Murray considers "providential" is "the evident coincidence of the principles which inspired the American Republic with the principles which are structural to the Western Christian political tradition." The founders built better than they knew, but they also left their accomplishment vulnerable to erosion by choosing to describe their work in terms derived from John Locke, whose political theory is ultimately destructive of all government, order, and liberty.

The founding must thus be reinterpreted in a better light than the one in which the founders viewed it themselves. As it was for Lincoln, Murray maintains that the Declaration of Independence must be used to illuminate the Constitution—and this illumination requires deviating to some extent from Jefferson's intentions and self-understanding in writing it. For Murray, the Declaration, a "landmark of Western political theory," put "this nation under God." Like Lincoln, Murray believes that the only way to save the Constitution from the moral superficiality or excessive selfishness of secularism is to constitutionalize the Declaration. Brownson might have objected to this project on the grounds that the Declaration, with its theoretical and Lockean presuppositions, is actually more dangerously atheistic than the Constitution's pedestrian and narrowly political "We the people of the United States." That is why Brownson preferred to refer to America's "unwritten," but no less real, constitution that was embodied in its customs and tradition. Murray, in response, may well have pointed out that in the years since Lincoln's death it has become all but impossible to defend a correct understanding of the American order based entirely on an "unwritten constitution." America, Murray might have followed Lincoln in saying, is a country "dedicated to a proposition," not (at least consciously) to received wisdom.

The part of the American proposition that is most imperiled in our time is the belief that the principles we hold in common are true—that is, that they actually correspond to the created nature of human beings. If this faith in a "realist epistemology is denied," then "the American proposition is eviscerated . . . in one stroke." Murray's realism holds that human beings are oriented by nature toward the discovery of truth. That view now seems to be denied everywhere, and one main reason for the denial is that the contract theory of Locke was itself based on the denial of realism. Locke and his successors (including, to some extent, Jefferson) believed that social and political reality is created out of nothing by sovereign human beings. According to Murray, we can most effectively defend our principles by abandoning Locke in favor of the realist St. Thomas. Echoing Brownson, he asserts that our founders' belief in Locke's teaching concerning the state of nature is no longer credible. Their "serene, and often naive, certainties of the eighteenth century" sound like nonsense to our ears. The deconstruction of Lockeanism, then, points the way to a realism that would truly make sense of the American proposition.

More even than Brownson, Murray contends that Americans now need to employ reason to become conscious of their purpose. With the waning of Lockeanism, our ability to appeal to our political "fathers" for guidance is quite limited. The problem of human freedom "stands revealed to us" in a way it was not to our fathers, because we, not they, are in a position to see the "naked essence," the nihilistic individualism, at the core of the modern experiment to which they contributed. We have no choice but to confront what they did not have to confront.

Following the path opened up by Brownson, Murray contends that the modern idea of freedom has been primarily destructive. It has left human beings dissatisfied with all traditional, natural, or "given" answers to the question, "What is man?" We no longer know why being human is good at all. In *The American Republic,* Brownson articulates fears about the Rousseauian theories that inform radical humanitarianism—fears that appear to be confirmed by Murray's reflections almost a century later. Communism, Murray claims, was "political modernity carried to its logical conclusion," by which he means that the anthropocentric thrust "that is implicit or unintentional in modernity" became "explicit or deliberate in the Communist system."

Well before the revolution of 1989, Murray knew that communism was the end of modern history, but not the end of history itself. Hope for history's end has always been a misanthropic "mirage." At the end of this destructive modern era, human beings feel, in Murray's words, a "spiritual vacuum . . . at the heart of human existence." Murray observes that "postmodern" man cannot help but engage in "anxious reflection" about how our "hollow emptiness [should] be filled." We have no choice but to confront "the nature and structure of reality itself," and by so doing make "a metaphysical decision about the nature of man." In a way, we are bet-

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ter situated in our time than Brownson was in his to see the futility of the modern ambition to cut man off from the divine. We now know that we cannot do without metaphysical and theological reflection; despite the best efforts of its children, the modern era simply failed to destroy the thoughtful and anxious human individual. It is now up to this individual to choose to recognize the truth about being and human being—a truth embodied in natural law—and to reject the ideological lies and Lockean abstractions that were devised to distract us from it.

While Murray seems at times to differ from Brownson in his affirmation of the rational self-sufficiency of natural law, the two thinkers actually agree that philosophic inquiry, properly employed, will discover its own limits and thus uncover the point at which the natural law reveals itself to the human mind. They also agree that a true understanding of human liberty depends on revelation or belief in a Creator, and that this belief can be affirmed by reason as the best explanation of the mystery of meaning and existence. Revelation leads human beings beyond what they would know by nature alone, teaching "the equality of all men, and the unity of the human race." It is only through revelation that we can know the truth that we are more than political and rational animals, that we are creatures with a duty to the Creator. It is only through revelation, according to Brownson, that we know that natural law is law.

By focusing on the truth and the being who can know it by nature—and, finally, on the dependence of reason on revelation—Murray, whether he knew it or not, followed in Brownson's footsteps. With Brownson and Murray, we can say that there is an American tradition of Thomistic realism that opposes itself to the dominant American tradition of contractualism and pragmatism, while also resolutely affirming the achievement of American constitutionalism. We might add to the American Thomist tradition the great literary artists Walker Percy and Flannery O'Connor. Percy, for example, realistically affirmed the truth and goodness of science while also rejecting scientific claims that do not acknowledge the reality of the distinctive excellence, and destiny, of human beings.

Brownson and Murray teach us the important lesson that the beliefs we hold in common as Americans must really be true if our liberty is to be defensible. Where Brownson goes beyond Murray is in his robust defense of the necessarily national or territorial character of democracy. This was arguably his keenest insight—and one that contemporary Catholics, in America and elsewhere, inclined as they are toward skepticism of national sovereignty and admiration of transpolitical institutions, would do well to ponder.

For Brownson, national solidarity is a natural human potential rooted in necessary human dependence. It also accords with the real but limited human powers of knowing and loving one another. The universality of reason and even religion, given our natural possibilities and limitations, cannot be the model for political order. The proper political form is thus the nation, the modern equivalent of the *polis*. Brownson thought national solidarity perfectly compatible with the solidarity of the human race through reason and faith, as long as the state was properly oriented toward the truth.

Given our need to flourish as social but limited beings, government deserves our love, loyalty, and obedience. "Loyalty," Brownson writes, "is the highest, noblest, and most generous of human virtues, and is the human element of that sublime love or charity which the inspired Apostle tells us is the fulfillment of the law." Loyalty is more specifically human or particular than the supernatural virtue of charity. And charity cannot replace loyalty as a political or national passion. So Christianity elevates "civic virtues to the rank of religious virtues [by] making loyalty a matter of conscience." Brownson even asserts that "he who dies on the battlefield fighting for his country ranks with him who dies at the stake for his faith." More precisely, "Civic virtues are themselves religious virtues, or at least virtues without which there are no religious virtues, since no man who does not love his brother does or can love God." Human beings approach the universal through the particular, and love of the personal Creator cannot be separated from other particular human beings. Human love is never for human beings in general. All men are brothers, but men come to know brotherly love only when they experience political solidarity with their fellow citizens.

Awareness of these truths is lamentably rare today among Catholic thinkers, though there are prominent exceptions. The French Catholic Tocquevillian, Pierre Manent, is one of them. In numerous books and essays, Manent has established himself as one of our most accomplished defenders of the nation in general, and his own French nation in particular. This is all the more remarkable given that France, like most of the rest of Europe, is currently in the process of enthusiastically dissolving its own sovereignty in favor of the transpolitical entity of the European Union.

In a decidedly Brownsonian spirit, Manent notes that in contemporary Europe, the political or republican dimension of human life, genuine concern with the common good, has almost disappeared. Manent affirms with Brownson that "man as a free and rational being cannot fulfill himself outside a political community, with all the consequences (not all of them pleasant) that this entails. It is in the political body, and only

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in the political body, that we seriously put things in common." Whether described as a nation, city, or *polis*, the political community is where deliberation over justice occurs; it is thus qualitatively different from the family, and it alone can serve as the model for distinctively human community.

Manent notes that despite its desire for self-sufficiency, even modern democracy needs to be instantiated in a "body." It needs limits, a "territorial framework," that may seem arbitrary from the heights of theological speculation but is indispensable for the existence of political life. The modern European, Manent explains, wants the principle of consent to govern all of life—for everything to be the product of his will, for nothing to be given or providential. The result is a paradox: "The European want[s] only what he himself will[s]; he reject[s] as arbitrary and outdated the nation, the political instrument that allow[s] him, by giving him limits, to exercise his sovereignty or will." Yet the willful escape from limits paradoxically thwarts the exercise of political will: "The European as a citizen finds himself able to accomplish less and less." Hence, republican government—like all government—must be territorial, and loyalty, more than consent, must be the foundation of good government and political life.

The withering away of the state thus comes at the expense of all that human beings rightly regard as good. The truth, as Manent points out, is that people cannot "live long within civilization alone without some sense of political belonging (which is necessarily exclusive), and thus without some definition of what we hold in common." And what we hold in common, in light of what we have inherited from the Greeks, Romans, and Christians, must be partly particular, or exclusive to us as citizens, and partly universal, or an expression of the solidarity of all human beings. The modern nation, with its mixture of the exclusivity of citizenship and openness to universal truth embodied in religion and transnational civilization and culture, mirrors, if only very imperfectly, the complexity within human nature itself.

In some sense, then, Manent's work today serves the same purpose in our time that Brownson's did in his. The political thinker, in Manent's words, "legitimates the [nation] before the Church"; he "affirms the human virtues" and "maintains the legitimacy of human affirmation." He defends the naturalness of political life and the reality of the particular human individual against empty and impotent cosmopolitanism.

But that affirmation must be under God. Manent knows, as Brownson did before him, that the best political thinkers must affirm "the universality of the Church against the particularity of the city" and display "a skepticism toward every human self-assertion that remains particular." That is, they must defend the republic, civilization, and the Church against barbarism. But at the same time, and no less urgently, they must defend the truth—and thus freedom of thought, the individual, and the Church—against the despotism toward which all nations tend when they resist the influence of the truth of revelation. FT

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Ivan Karamazov's Mistake

Ralph C. Wood

It is has become commonplace to regard Ivan Karamazov's "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" as a prescient parable glorifying human freedom and defending it against the kind of totalitarian threats it would face in the twentieth century. Fyodor Dostoevsky's angry atheist delivers an uncanny prophecy of the omnicompetent, freedom-denying state that would arise in his own native Russia. But concerning the liberty that is the only cure for state-sponsored oppression, Ivan is terribly wrong. The Christ of the Grand Inquisitor advocates an idea of freedom that Dostoevsky considered an abomination. It is linked to Ivan's critique of God for allowing innocent suffering. For Dostoevsky, the problem of evil and the question of human liberty are profoundly joined: our answer to one quandary determines our answer to the other. Freedom and suffering are interstitial realities, as the Grand Inquisitor understands, even if he understands them wrongly.

Western readers of *The Brothers Karamazov* have remained virtually blind to Dostoevsky's critique of the Grand Inquisitor. The reason, I believe, is that Ivan's vision of human freedom is so very near to our own secular notion of liberty, and thus to our increasing relegation of the Christian gospel to the private sphere of mere preference. Though he was a student of Western Christianity and culture, Dostoevsky remained fundamentally Russian in his conception of God and the world, of good and evil, of the sacred and the secular. We cannot properly understand his treatment of these matters, therefore, until we grasp his Orthodox reading of them. Thus must we examine his parable of the Grand Inquisitor vis-à-vis the Orthodox doctrine of human freedom as being founded not on autonomous choice but on communal dependence on God.

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Ivan Karamazov is no straw atheist. He gives voice to the philosophical problem of evil perhaps more clearly and cogently than any other speaker or actor, any other philosopher or theologian, in the whole of world literature. Yet he is also a very Russian atheist. He thinks with his solar plexus, as D. H. Lawrence might have said. He is *passionately* intellectual. Ivan does not pose the question of theodicy as a philosophical conundrum, as it is often posed in the West. From Leibniz through Hume, from Alvin Plantinga to J. L. Mackie, the problem of evil has often been cast in bare intellectual terms: how to *think through* the contradiction that stands between the goodness, omniscience, and omnipotence of God, on the one hand, and the massive misery and undeserved suffering that characterize God's world, on the other. In *J.B.*, his dramatic contemporizing of the Job story, Archibald MacLeish puts the intellectual problem of evil tersely but accurately: "If God is good He is not God. If God is God He is not good." If God is imbued with the charity which He Himself enjoins His creatures to live by, then He must lack the divine power to create and sustain a world in which such charity obtains: He is not God. If, by contrast, God possesses the sovereignty and strength to perform what He wills, then this misery-riddled world must be proof that He is deficient in love itself: He is not good. Ivan does *not* make his case against God's goodness in this intellectualized fashion. He is not a philosophical thinker who abstracts ideas from experience in order to test their logical clarity and coherence. As Albert Camus observed, "Ivan really lives his problems." They are matters, quite literally, of life and death, of eternal life and eternal death, of ultimate bliss or final misery. Ivan is willing to face the anguish

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and terror inherent not only in thinking but also in living without God.

As one who knows the truths of the heart, Ivan also knows that reason alone cannot fathom the deepest things. On the contrary, reason can be put to nefarious uses: "Reason is a scoundrel," he confesses. Ivan is willing, therefore, to live "even . . . against logic." Yet he is unwilling to live as a mindless vitalist, embracing life without much regard for its meaning and, even less, with a blithe disregard for its injustice. So huge are the world's moral horrors, Ivan argues, that they undermine any notion of divine order and purpose. Hence Ivan's truly wrenching quandary: Can he love life without believing that it has ultimate meaning—believing, instead, that it is godless and absurd? Ivan is young and strong. He brims with intellectual curiosity no less than bodily energy. He wants to travel to Europe and to learn its science and its history. As a good romantic, Ivan cites Schiller's celebrated line about the "sticky little leaves" whose gummy unfolding in spring seems to signal the whole world's rebirth. They remind Ivan of all that is precious in life, the glories of human love and natural splendor, the inward movement of all things toward life's energizing center.

> There is still an awful lot of centripetal force on our planet, Alyosha. I want to live, and I do live, even if it be against logic. Though I do not believe in the order of things, still the sticky little leaves that come out in the spring are dear to me, the blue sky is dear to me, some people are dear to me, whom one loves sometimes, would you believe it, without even knowing why; some human deeds are dear to me, which one has perhaps long ceased believing in, but still honors with one's heart, out of old habit.

It is noteworthy that Ivan makes this confession to his young brother Alyosha just after he has broken off relations with Katerina Ivanovna. Ivan feels as free and light as the air. Living in this detached and uncommitted—indeed, this almost angelic—state, Ivan makes qualifications that are altogether as important as his affirmations. Though he wants to drink life to the lees, he confesses that only "some people" and only "some human deeds" are dear to him, and that he loves them only "sometimes." Ivan deliberately denies the teaching of Father Zosima, the head of an Orthodox monastery who also stands at the religious center of the novel. Father Zosima insists that love cannot be selective, that it must be at once universal and concrete, that we must not love those who are conveniently remote so much as those who are inconveniently near. Already, it is evident, the philosophical and the religious arguments are linked. Ivan not only thinks but also lives in autonomous and anti-communal terms. It is precisely the neighbor whom we *cannot* love, he insists. The neighbor's objective and objectionable otherness—his bad breath, his foolish face, his ill manners—threaten Ivan's sovereign selfhood. Of such a neighbor, Ivan complains like an early Jean-Paul Sartre that "he is another and not me." Despite his eager embrace of the world, therefore, Ivan wants to remain a solitary and transcendent judge over it, a godlike withholder no less than a gracious giver of praise. Others must satisfy his own criteria before he will embrace them. And because God does not satisfy the requirements of Ivan's logic, he will not believe in God.

Yet Ivan's logic is not sophomoric. He makes a strenuous case against God's goodness. He refuses, for example, to cite the many natural calamities—typhoons and tornadoes, floods and droughts, fires and earthquakes and disease—that seem to disclose a ham-fisted Creator. Ivan knows that such cosmic evils might be attributed to a natural process that is divinely ordered. Like Job, he might discover that, while the natural order seems inimical to human happiness, its operations might have their own purposes, not revealing any divine hostility toward human well-being. But Ivan is not vexed chiefly with natural evils. He cares about moral evils, about the crimes that we human creatures commit. The standard explanation of such moral evils is that they are the unfortunate consequence of human freedom. God's uncoerced creatures, so the argument runs, are capable of grossly misusing their liberty. If God were to prevent evil human actions, His world would no longer be free.

Ivan subjects the standard free-will defense of the divine goodness to devastating critique. At best, he says, the free perversion of human will explains only the suffering of adults, the grown-ups who are accountable for the evils that they both cause and suffer. They have eaten the apple of knowledge, says Ivan. Because they have followed the demonic temptation to become "as gods," they deserve their self-wrought misery. What this standard theodicy cannot account for, Ivan maintains, is the agony of children whose wills are still innocent. That their suffering results from human cruelty more than natural mishap makes it all the more horrible. As Ivan notices, animals rarely torment their prey. Only our human kind derives erotic pleasure from its savagery, becoming virtual voluptuaries of cruelty. In a passage that would have made even the Marquis de Sade tremble, Ivan declares the awful allurement of unprotected innocence. "It is precisely the defenselessness of these creatures that tempts the torturers, the angelic trustfulness of the child, who has nowhere to turn and no one to turn to—that is what enflames the vile blood of the torturer."

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Ivan offers searing examples of such wanton and motiveless malignity. Indeed, he creates a virtual phantasmagoria of suffering from actual instances of human barbarity that he has read about in Russian newspapers: Turkish soldiers cutting babies from their mother's wombs and throwing them in the air in order to impale them on their bayonets; enlightened parents stuffing their five-year-old daughter's mouth with excrement and locking her in a freezing privy all night for having wet the bed, while they themselves sleep soundly; Genevan Christians teaching a naive peasant to bless the good God even as the poor dolt is beheaded for thefts and murders that his ostensibly Christian society caused him to commit; a Russian general, offended at an eight-year-old boy for accidentally hurting the paw of the officer's dog, inciting his wolfhounds to tear the child to pieces; a lady and gentleman flogging their eight-year-old daughter with a birch-rod until she collapses while crying for mercy, "Papa, papa, dear papa."

Such evils cannot be justified, Ivan argues, either by religious arguments based on history's beginning or by secular arguments that look to its end. The Edenic exercise of free will is not worth the tears of even one little girl shivering all night in a privy and crying out from her excrement-filled mouth to "dear, kind God" for protection. Yet neither will Ivan accept the Hegelian-Marxist thesis that the harmonious final outcome of history sublates its present evils. The notion that such savagery reveals the necessary consequences of human freedom or that it contributes to history's ultimate result is, to Ivan, a moral and religious outrage. Neither is he any more satisfied with the conventional doctrine of hell, which holds that the monsters of torment will themselves be eternally tormented. Hellish punishment for heinous malefactors would not restore their victims, Ivan reminds us. The impaled babies would not be brought back to life nor would their mothers be consoled, the dismembered boy would not live out his years, the weeping girls would not be comforted. Ivan rejects all such theodicies because they belittle innocent suffering and thus commit unforgivable sacrilege against innocent sufferers. With a dramatic metaphor drawn again from Schiller, he refuses to offer his hosanna for such a world: he returns his ticket to such a life.

Ivan's brief against belief is intellectually unanswerable. Dostoevsky makes no attempt to provide such an answer anywhere in the course of the novel. He concedes that there is no *logical* justification for the suffering of innocents. Yet this is hardly to say that there are no *theological* answers to Ivan. It is rather to say that they will be found, if at all, elsewhere than in abstract argument; they will be located in the realm of religion and politics and the everyday requirements of true freedom. In seeking to embody such answers in living form, Dostoevsky offers the figures of Zosima and Alyosha as his religious counters to Ivan's atheist revolt. The most notable fact about the monastic elder and his young disciple is that, unlike Ivan, they are not Euclidean men. They believe that, in the most important matters, parallel lines do indeed meet. Things counter can converge because the deepest truths are not univocal but analogical and paradoxical. Theirs is not a three-dimensional block universe but rather a layered cosmos containing multiple orders of being. For Zosima and Alyosha, the material and immaterial worlds are never distant and remote from each other, as in much of Western thought. The created and uncreated realms are deeply intertwined, each participating in the life of the other.

Ivan remains opaque to this interstitial cosmos that calls for interstitial discernment. Dostoevsky describes it as *proniknovenie*, an "intuitive seeing through" or a "spiritual penetration." Such theological sight is the product not of any special intelligence but of the iconic imagination. The icons of Eastern Orthodoxy are produced by a theology of presence rather than one of representation. God's own splendor is said to radiate through the icon, confronting worshipers with the experience of Uncreated Light. The icon is not an image that one looks *at* in order to discern an earthly image of something holy, in an attempt to portray the invisible in visible terms. Nor is it an expression of the artist's own subjective experience of the sacred. Rather the icon looks *out* at the beholder. It seeks to open up the eternal realm so that its light might shine forth. Icons do not seek to embody a discarnate world, but rather to reveal an earthly world that has been rendered transparent by a spiritualization that embraces the entire cosmos. Worshipers are themselves transformed by the invisible light that emanates from the icon, penetrating to the depths of their being and forming their true personhood. At Zosima's funeral, Alyosha has such a transfiguring experience of this mystical touching of the visible and invisible worlds. It prompts him to repeat the example of his dead master in an iconic gesture of prostration:

> Filled with rapture, his soul yearned for freedom, space, vastness. Over him the heavenly dome, full of quiet, shining stars, hung boundlessly. From the zenith to the horizon the still-dim Milky Way stretched its double strand. Night, fresh and quiet, almost unstirring, enveloped the earth. The white towers and golden domes of the church gleamed in the sapphire sky. The luxuriant autumn flowers in the flowerbeds near the house had fallen asleep until morning. The silence of the earth seemed to merge with the silence of the heavens, the mystery of the earth to be touched by the mystery of the stars. . . . Alyosha stood gazing and

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> suddenly, as if he had been cut down, he threw himself to the earth. . . .
>
> It was as if threads from all those innumerable worlds of God all came together in his soul, and it was trembling all over, "touching other worlds." He wanted to forgive everyone for everything, and to ask forgiveness, oh, not for himself! but for all and for everything, "as others are asking for me," rang in his soul.

Ivan is blind to this iconic joining of the earthly and heavenly realms, perhaps because he is also blind to the Orthodox understanding of human personhood. After all, he is a man obsessed with Western ideas. Yet Ivan is not a rationalist, as is often said, but rather a thinker who wants to disjoin his thought from its rightful engagement with God and the world. He lives a dichotomous life. Ivan's mind is even more severely perverted than his will. He fails to discern, for example, that the doctrine of immortality concerns not only the life that is transfigured in the world to come, but also the life that is meant to be transformed within this world. To use the language of St. Paul found in 1 Corinthians 15 and that of John's Gospel contained in the novel's epigraph, mortality is meant to put on immortality, the dying seed to bring forth much fruit. To become immortal is to become a unique and unrepeatable person who has been perfected in both loving and being loved.

Ivan's contention that no one can truly love others as he loves himself is linked, therefore, to his denial of immortality. Ivan holds, as we have seen, that other persons stand like dense Euclidean clumps to block the path of his own autonomy. So long as we are confined within the realm of mere human possibility, Dostoevsky is agreed with Ivan. He despised the soupy benevolence that pervaded much of nineteenth-century European and American culture. "Those who love men in general," he often said, "hate men in particular." Yet he also insisted that Christ's *kenosis*—the divine self-emptying hymned in Philippians 2—can accomplish what is humanly impossible: the emptying of human egoism for the sake of true charity. Through this kenotic love that Zosima and his disciple Alyosha both embody, one actually becomes a person by becoming another self—not an Ego but a Thou, a person who exists only in self-giving solidarity with Christ and thereby with others.

When personhood is measured in this kenotic manner, Alyosha can be seen as a credible character, rather than the ghostly and gossamer creature he is often accused of being. Unlike Ivan, Alyosha does not clip newspaper accounts of suffering children and then offer anti-theological arguments *about* them; instead, he actually seeks out the insulted and injured, identifying himself *with* them. He joins faith with practice, thinking with doing, thus answering the problem of evil with deeds rather than reasons—with his whole personhood, not with his mind alone. Through his patient and long-suffering friendships with children, Alyosha helps redeem the pathetic Ilyusha Snegirov, even as he also helps to set the nihilistic Kolya Krassotkin on the path to new life. Alyosha pulls these boys out of their misery only at great cost to himself. Dostoevsky makes clear in the novel's final scene, when the youths gather to cheer Alyosha as if he were their savior, that he is a true icon of Christ, a man through whom the invisible light of eternity brightly shines. Yet Alyosha deflects all praise away from himself and toward Christ. As the only man who has suffered absolutely everything, says Alyosha, Christ alone has the right to forgive absolutely everything—even the tormentors of children. Yet Alyosha's mere mention of the "only sinless One" so enrages Ivan that he comes forth with his "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor."

Ivan's parable appears to be an assault on the character of Jesus, when its real target is humanity itself. Though he professes to love "some men," Ivan can no more give himself to other persons than he can grant the existence of God. For Dostoevsky, the one follows from the other: one cannot scorn the love of God and still love human beings. Ivan ends as a misanthrope, I maintain, because he has a modern secular conception of freedom that is incapable of fulfillment except by monstrous supermen.

The plot of Ivan's legend is familiar enough, even if its meaning remains quite obscure. The risen Christ returns to earth in fifteenth-century Seville, where he immediately begins to perform miracles. The people hail him as their liberator from the awful *autos da fé* that the Spanish Inquisition is carrying out. Jesus is quickly arrested by the church authorities and imprisoned in a dimly lit dungeon. There the ninety-year-old Cardinal Grand Inquisitor relentlessly grills the silent Christ. This ancient church-ogre accuses Jesus of having required men to live by the strength of their strong wills, cruelly ignoring the fact that they are impotent creatures who can live only for the sake of a swinish happiness. The Inquisitor thus upbraids Christ for having rejected the Tempter's wilderness offerings of bread and power and fame. These, he says, are the satisfying substitutes that human beings crave. They do not want the awful autonomy that Christ allegedly commanded:

> Instead of taking over men's freedom, you increased it still more for them! Did you forget that peace and even death are dearer to man than free choice in the knowledge of good and evil? There is nothing more seductive for man than the freedom of his conscience, but there is nothing more tormenting either. And so, instead of a firm foundation for appeasing

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> human conscience once and for all, you chose everything that was unusual, enigmatic, and indefinite, you chose everything that was beyond men's strength, and thereby acted as if you did not love them at all. . . . You desired the free love of man, that he should follow you freely, seduced and captivated by you. Instead of the firm and ancient law, man had henceforth to decide for himself, with a free heart, what is good and what is evil, having only your image before him as a guide.

It is astonishing that so many readers have taken the Grand Inquisitor's conception of freedom as if it were Dostoevsky's own—and also as if it were true. Camus regarded it as an unprecedented statement of the human cry for liberty against all religious restraints. Camus can make such a claim only because, together with Ivan, he embraces the thoroughly secular conception of freedom that has largely prevailed in the modern West, from John Stuart Mill to John Dewey and John Rawls. Ivan's Inquisitor belongs to their lineage. Liberty, he declares, entails a brave and lonely autonomy, as each individual determines for himself the difference between good and evil. Jesus serves not as the savior who redeems corporate humanity from sin, therefore, but as a moral example to guide solitary and heroic individuals—having himself trod the same lonely path of self-determination.

Michael Sandel has shown what is problematic about this notion of freedom as consisting entirely of unfettered choices. Such choices are prompted by nothing other than the individual subject and his private conscience acting either on persuasive evidence or the arbitrary assertion of will. Just as this modern secular self is not determined by any larger aims or attachments that it has not chosen for itself, neither does it have obligations to any larger communities, except those it autonomously chooses to join. The one moral norm, it follows, is the injunction to respect the dignity of others by not denying them the freedom to exercise their own moral autonomy. Such an understanding of human liberty, argues Sandel, opposes

> any view that regards us as obligated to fulfill ends that we have not chosen—ends given by nature or God, for example, or by our identities as members of families, peoples, cultures, or traditions. Encumbered identities such as these are at odds with the liberal conception of [persons] as free and independent selves, unbound by prior moral ties, capable of choosing our ends for ourselves. This is the conception that finds expression in the ideal of the state as a neutral framework . . . a framework of rights that refuses to choose among competing values and ends. For the liberal self, what matters above all, what is most essential to our personhood, is not the ends we choose but our capacity to choose them.

Dostoevsky repeatedly attacked this modern secular notion of freedom and personhood, dismissing it scornfully as "socialism." Astounded by the Inquisitor's similar idea of liberty as absolute autonomy, Alyosha cries out to Ivan: "And who will believe you about freedom? . . . Is that the way to understand it? It's a far cry from the Orthodox idea." It's also a far cry from the Jewish and Catholic and classical Protestant ideas of freedom. In all four traditions, we are not made into free persons by becoming autonomous selves who have been immunized from all obligations that we have not independently chosen. Our freedom resides rather in becoming communal selves who freely embrace our moral, religious, and political obligations. These responsibilities come to us less by our own choosing than through a thickly webbed network of shared friendships and familial ties, through political practices and religious promises. In a very real sense, such "encumbrances" choose us before we choose them. There is no mythical free and autonomous self that exists apart from these ties. There are only gladly or else miserably bound persons—namely, persons who find their duties and encumbrances to be either gracious or onerous.

Alyosha's idea of freedom is communal because it is first of all religious. Athanasius of Alexandria articulated it most clearly in the fourth century: "God became man so that man may become God." The central Orthodox doctrine is called *theosis* or *theopoesis*—the divinizing or deifying of humanity. The Eastern Church does not call for believers to imitate Jesus through the exercise of moral choice. It summons them rather to participate in the life of Christ through the transformative power of the liturgy and sacraments of the Church. To become persons in the true sense is to become what the New Testament calls "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). The modern secular notion of freedom articulated by the Grand Inquisitor is the very definition of slavery. As Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky observes, the Eastern Church regards choice as the mark not of freedom but of fallenness, as a debasement of true liberty, as a loss of the divine likeness: "Our nature being overclouded with sin no longer knows its true good . . . and so the human person is always faced with the necessity of choice; it goes forward gropingly." To deliberate autonomously in the face of alternatives, it follows, is not liberty but servitude. True freedom, says Lossky, is revealed in the Christ who freely renounces his own will in order to accomplish the will of his Father. Alyosha is free in precisely this way. Jesus has not aban-

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doned him to his lonely conscience in order to let him solitarily determine good and evil for himself. The self-emptying Christ has freed Alyosha to empty his own ego, to live and act in joyful obedience to God, and thus to be bound in unbreakable solidarity with his father and brothers, with his friends and enemies, and (not least of all) with the miserable children of his neighborhood.

Given the Grand Inquisitor's anti-Orthodox conception of freedom as unencumbered self-determining choice, it is not surprising that he should have contempt for the average run of men. He despises their dependence, their animal desire for security and comfort. The Inquisitor thus informs Jesus that the Catholic Church has been forced to correct his impossible summons to autonomy. Rome understands, says the Inquisitor, what Christ did not—that men must first be fed before they can be made virtuous. "Make us your slaves," the Inquisitor's masses cry out, "but feed us." Thus has the cynical church of the Grand Inquisitor replaced Christ's purported call for unfettered autonomy with its own sheepish substitutes: "miracle, mystery, and authority." Yet even these sorry placebos will not finally suffice, the Inquisitor insists, for the modern world will confront men with such scientific wonders and terrors that the vast human horde will not be content even with comfort and security. They will finally demand the antheap of personal oblivion, in order that they might be relieved of their freedom. They want only to live in childish self-indulgence:

> Freedom, free reason, and science will lead them into such a maze, and confront them with such . . . insoluble mysteries, that some of them, unruly and ferocious, will exterminate themselves; others, unruly but feeble, will exterminate each other; and the remaining third, feeble and wretched, will crawl to our feet and cry out to us: "Yes, you were right, you alone possess his mystery, and we are coming back to you—save us from ourselves." . . . Yes, we will make them work, but in the hours free from labor we will arrange their lives like a children's game, with children's songs, choruses, and innocent dancing.

Inverting the gospel entirely, the Grand Inquisitor declares that only the Master Managers like himself will suffer. Yet these new secular christs of the omnicompetent state will bear their torment heroically. Knowing their totalitarian paternalism to be a gargantuan lie, they nonetheless retain the courage to feed it to the gullible millions: "For only we, we who keep the mystery, only we shall be unhappy. There will be thousands of millions of happy babes, and a hundred thousand sufferers who have taken upon themselves the curse of the knowledge of good and evil. Peacefully [these multiplied millions] will die; peacefully will they expire in [Christ's] name, and beyond the grave they will find only death. But we will keep the secret, and for their own happiness we will entice them with a heavenly and eternal reward."

This final prophecy of the Grand Inquisitor is perhaps the most frightening augury in the entirety of Dostoevsky's work. With amazing prescience, he foresees the rise of the totalitarian state that has dominated much of late-modern life, killing more people by violent means than in all of the previous ages combined. This is the era of blood, and ours is the culture of death. That Dostoevsky mistakenly linked our calamity with the Catholic Church, and that he did not foresee its first triumph in his own beloved Russia, hardly invalidates his vision. On the contrary, Dostoevsky was right to prophesy that, if we begin (as Ivan does) with absolute anti-communal freedom, we will end (again as Ivan does) with absolute anti-communal slavery, whether in its individualist or its totalitarian form. Were Dostoevsky living at this hour, he might well ask whether the American reduction of nearly every aspect of human existence, including religion itself, to either entertainment or commodification constitutes a yet worse kind of herd-existence than the one Ivan describes—a subtler and therefore deadlier attempt to relieve humanity of its suffering and sin, and thus of its real character and interest.

Given Ivan's horrifying vision of this grim and Christless future, it is not surprising that Alyosha regards Ivan's "poem" as praising Jesus rather than reviling him. Yet Alyosha does not commend the Christ of the parable because he commands autonomous self-determination as the answer to a totalizing politics of oppression. Rather, the Jesus of Ivan's legend is to be praised because his silence indicates his patient confidence that evil will eventually undo itself, and that Ivan is to be embraced rather than condemned in his concern for the suffering of innocents.

Ivan had in fact ended his parable by having the silent Savior gently kiss the Inquisitor on "his bloodless, ninety-year-old lips." Alyosha instantly recognizes that Ivan's imagination was groping for the profoundest of all truths—that nothing other than God's self-emptying love can answer bitter unbelief. To bring home the point, Alyosha repeats Christ's act: he kisses the tormented Ivan. It's another Russian iconic gesture of humility and submission, and it calls for a recompensing kiss of humble recognition and identification. Ivan will not grant it, for then he, too, would be called to embrace the same kenotic suffering and joy that imbue Alyosha's entire life. Instead, Ivan dismisses Alyosha's act as mere plagiarism. Ivan must rid himself of this Christ-like gesture that is the real answer to human agony. It is appropriate, therefore, that the Inquisitor's

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final command to the truth-gesturing Christ who kissed him is not *Maranatha*, but "Go and do not come again . . . do not come at all . . . never, never!"

Alyosha, as Christ's earthly embodiment, will not depart. Instead, he confronts Ivan with the moral and religious consequence of his atheism. If God is dead, Alyosha famously declares, "everything is permitted." We must not misread Alyosha here. He does not deny that men can be moral without believing in God. He insists, instead, that such morality has no ultimate basis, that freedom understood as self-construction hovers over an abyss of nihilism, and thus that all godless peoples and cultures await their inexorable plunge into the barbaric void. The first epistle of John defines sin precisely as lawlessness. Ellis Sandoz observes that John of Damascus, the eighth-century Greek theologian, linked this definition of sin to the larger claim that barbarism is the primal heresy: "Every man as independent and a law unto himself after the dictates of his own will."

Dostoevsky regards individualist autonomy not only as barbaric but also as satanic. Perhaps the chief of Ivan's demonic deceptions is the widespread acceptance of the Inquisitor's argument that "miracle, mystery, and authority" are pathetic necessities for weak-willed men. Just as Ivan misreads freedom to mean unencumbered self-determination, so does the Inquisitor pervert the meaning of miracle, mystery, and authority. Nowhere in the novel does God perform miracles by jumping in and out of His creation like a divine factotum who accedes to human petition if it is sufficiently pious. It is exactly such a sentimental and superstitious understanding of miracles—namely, as God's arbitrary violation of the natural order to heed clamant human request—that Alyosha is required to surrender. Hoping that Zosima's corpse would be wondrously preserved, giving off the sweet odor of sanctity, Alyosha is horrified when it putrefies prematurely. The saint's rapidly rotting body demonstrates to Alyosha that God is not a sacred Santa Claus who brings him whatever he wants. In the "Cana in Galilee" chapter, Alyosha learns that miracles do not *precede* and thus produce faith; rather, they *follow* faith as the by-product of the transformed life. That Alyosha can kiss the earth and bless the creation despite its rampant suffering, that he can live as a monk in a sex-sodden world, that he can increase men's joy amidst human misery as Christ increased it by turning water into wedding wine—this, he learns, is the true miracle: the divine possibility that overcomes human impossibility.

Like a brittle Enlightenment philosophe, perhaps a Diderot or a Comte, the Inquisitor also slanders mystery. He reduces it to a cynical mystification, to a new secular priestcraft, a political anesthetizing of the masses with the morphine of heaven. "For only we, we . . . keep the mystery," he boasts. For him, mystery can be hoarded as a weapon in his arsenal of deceit, as a spiritual poison gas meant to blind true vision and stifle true thought. For Alyosha and all other believers, by contrast, the *mysterion* enlivens such vision and thought. It's a word that can also be translated *sacrament*. The mystery of God is thus not a riddle or a conundrum, not a brain-straining puzzle; it is the one reality that prompts an endless delectation of mind no less than heart and soul. "In the proper religious sense of the term," writes Orthodox bishop Kallistos Ware, "'mystery' signifies not only hiddenness but disclosure. . . . A mystery is . . . something *revealed* for our understanding, but which we never understand *exhaustively* because it leads into the depth or the darkness of God."

Perversely, if also consistently, Ivan has the Inquisitor voice a skewed understanding of authority. He regards it as the tyrannical power of the state or the church to suppress individual autonomy. For him, authority can have only the negative meaning of raw coercive force. For Alyosha, again in notable contrast to the Inquisitor, true authority (both human and divine) invites free submission of the will for the sake of the good—submission to the rightly constituted state, to his elder Zosima, to the incarnate Christ, to the merciful God. Free subjection of the will begins in penitence, as when Zosima confesses that all men are sinners and that he is the worst. It ends in the acceptance, even the embrace, of suffering.

Perhaps the novel's chief irony is that Ivan has turned rightful religious concern for injured innocents into wrongful personal justification of his own hatred and scorn. Claiming to care about the world's innocent sufferers, Ivan cannot care for the creature who is his own closest kin, his father. In a nightmare interview with the Devil, Ivan is made to recognize his own moral culpability for his father's death. He had poisoned Smerdyakov's mind with the demonic gospel that God is dead and that all things are permitted. Acting out what Ivan had intellectually advocated, Smerdyakov has killed old Fyodor in a dreadful demonstration that, in a godless world, absolutely nothing is forbidden. Since Satan is the primal deceiver, it is no wonder that Ivan has been made into his agent. Dostoevsky maintains that demonic perversions of mind are no mere intellectual failings: they issue in demonic perversions of will. Philosophical deicide results in existential parricide. The mental killing of God breaks the deepest of human bonds. It is thus fitting that Ivan the perverted intellectual should end in madness.

Yet Ivan's final insanity is not to be explained as psychosis alone. In the Orthodox tradition, to deny the presence and reality of God is to be subject to a psychopathic condition. Not sharing the Western doctrine of original sin, the Orthodox hold that every person retains an efficacious awareness of God, even after the

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Fall. "Just because it is light," writes Vladimir Lossky, "grace, the source of revelation, cannot remain within us unperceived. We are incapable of not being aware of God, if our nature is in proper spiritual health. Insensibility [to God] in the inner life is an abnormal condition." Lossky adds, far more darkly, that total unawareness of God "would be nothing other than hell, the final destruction of the person." It follows that Zosima is not a golden-hearted humanist when he defines hell as "the suffering of being unable to love." He is describing Ivan's spiritual condition exactly. Ivan suffers the hellish laceration of the soul that occurs when freedom is exercised negatively—not to engender life but to bring death. "Death for a person," declares Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, "means ceasing to love and to be loved, ceasing to be unique and unrepeatable, whereas life for the person means the survival of the uniqueness of its hypostasis [personification], which is affirmed and maintained by love."

To possess true freedom and personhood through love is, in Dostoevsky's view, to suffer rightly. It is to accept responsibility, not only for one's own sin, but also for the sins of others. All theodicies fail if they do not recognize that only the embrace of innocent suffering can answer the infliction of innocent suffering. One who is willing to suffer for Christ's sake must be willing, moreover, to suffer fools. Father Zosima exhibits such foolish suffering when, early in the novel, he makes a low bow of humility before the cruel buffoon who is old Fyodor Karamazov. It is an act utterly unlike the abstentions practiced by Nietzsche's *Übermensch.* The Overman is akin to a lion who has claws but refrains from using them. He doesn't show mercy so much as he seeks to humiliate the weaklings of the world with his contemptuous self-restraint. Though having the rightful authority to condemn the despicable old lecher, Zosima gestures forth his solidarity with Fyodor in bowing down before him. Unlike the Overman, Zosima identifies himself with the wretched creature. He knows that old Fyodor has become a buffoon, in large part, because everyone regards him as a fool. In secret pride and contempt for others, he fulfills their scornful judgment. Zosima refuses such judgment. He humbles himself before the despicable Fyodor, discerning in him the divine image and likeness: a person meant for agapeistic community rather than buffoonish autonomy. For Dostoevsky, the gospel of suffering in communal love is the only lasting answer to the perennial problem of evil and thus to the perennial question of human freedom. It is a gospel peculiar neither to East nor West because it is centered in the common Christian ground of the Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection. FT

Night Falling Early

Night falling early: silver in the duff,
frosty small change, and in our maple, crows,
calculating and tentative. But I
don't grudge darkness; I did back in my rough
and greedy youth spent wanting—deep in those
never-long-enough days I clung to—sky
whose blue coffers I prayed would never close.
It's easier now watching the years tick by,
the seasons balancing their books, the sun
swift in his passage, like a man who goes
home after his day's labor full of gruff
gratitude for the lights that one by one
rise up in welcome; glad of what he's done,
but gladder still it's done with, and enough.

Rhina P. Espaillat

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Dakota Christmas

J. Bottum

What fades in memory is not the fact but the feeling. I can call up nearly every detail of those Christmases like frozen frames of recollection:

A sparrow, its feathers so fluffed for warmth it looked like a fat monk in a robe and tonsure, peering out from the ice-cased lilac hedge while I sat at the living-room window, waiting for my parents to wake.

The sideways tilt of my father's head as he looked down in concentration, cutting out the sections of a grapefruit for Christmas breakfast.

The reassuring heft of the new Swiss Army knife from Uncle Hugo, smuggled in the pocket of my dress pants to church.

The steam rising while we washed the endless piles of dishes after Christmas dinner, until the fog condensed in rivulets that raced each other down the kitchen window panes to pool on the painted sill.

The ink-and-paper, new-book smell of Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island*, read with a flashlight under the blankets after my mother had come in to shut off the lights and whisper one last Merry Christmas.

I can call up nearly everything—except the emotion, the overwhelming waves that beat upon my sisters and me down the long stream of days in the Christmas season. To think again about those times is more to recall that we *had* a certain feeling than it is to recapture just how that feeling felt. The memories come faded, like last year's pine needles: the few that always seem to find their way in among the Christmas ornaments to sift out brittle and yellow when the box comes down from the back of the linen closet the next December.

Why should I remember the heavy-scented balsam tree we had when I was six? The long-needled ponderosa, drooping under the weight of its ornaments, when I was eight? The Douglas fir, the Black Hills pine, the juniper? The scallop-leaved holly sprigs set out on the sideboard and mantel with a stern warning every year not to eat the berries? The silly-looking plastic mistletoe my mother would hang, giggling with my father over a joke they wouldn't explain?

There in Pierre, there in South Dakota, my sisters and I were happy, I suppose, and we were sad, but "happy" and "sad" are always lies, of a sort: the words we use to smooth the edges off our memories and sand them down to generalities.

I know now, in retrospect, that the houses of my childhood—the duplex down by the Capitol in which we first lived, the place we moved to on Elizabeth Street, my grandmother's home on Grand, all the houses of my parents' friends—were simultaneously too hot and too cold. The clanking furnaces kept them overheated from September to April, a dry heat that dulled out within a year the gloss in the new paint on the window frames and cracked down the middle the door to the china cupboard. But these South Dakota houses were drafty as well: all winter the wind screamed down the frozen plains from Canada, clawing through the weather-stripping and the storm windows and the door seals and the crumbling mortar of the cinderblock foundations. And yet, I don't remember actually being any general thing like hot or cold. What I remember is the sharp specificity of lying on the living-room floor alongside the boiling radiator, propped up on my elbows and a cushion filched from the sofa, to read Gerald Durrell's *My Family and Other Animals* while the sweat dripped inside my shirt and the wind whistled up through the gap around the radiator pipe to chill my hands.

So, too, I don't remember being happy or sad. There were happy things and sad things, moments of unbearable fear and moments of lopsided comedy, tumbled together in such overwhelming immediacy I had nei-

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ther space nor time to rise above them and call them by some generic name. These days I live far from Pierre; after sojourns here and there, I've settled in Washington, D.C., with my wife Lorena and my four-year-old daughter Faith, and time moves differently now. The other day Lorena reminded me we had only a month in which to clear away enough work to take a trip we had scheduled—and then she began to laugh, asking, "Do you remember when a month seemed a *long* time?"

It might stand as the surest marker of the difference between childhood and age: a month was once forever, and now it's just a month. Last Saturday, after talking all morning about the planned visit that afternoon of her friend Violet, the child of another South Dakotan settled in Washington, my daughter Faith finally sat down on the stairs at noon to sob in . . . what? frustration? exhaustion? yearning? To say she was over-excited—as parents do, as Lorena and I did—does no good. That is experience seen from the outside, emotion risen above and understood. We could hold her and comfort her and wait for it to pass. But the real inwardness of the thing Faith was feeling: all that is gone from us now.

A children's toy catalogue came in the mail the other day—or, rather, an adult's toy catalogue, filled with the opportunity for grownups to buy at outrageous prices the toys of their childhood. There were Sting Ray bicycles with banana seats and giant U-shaped handle bars trailing multi-colored streamers from the plastic hand grips. There were Slinkies, pogo sticks, cap guns, and the kind of open-springed, bouncing nursery horses no liability-conscious manufacturer would dare offer children anymore.

All those toys I hungered for when I was young—just hearing their names is like listening to an ancient, half-forgotten litany of secularized Christmas. Tinker Toys, Erector Sets, and Lincoln Logs. Creepy Crawlers, Flexible Flyers, Raggedy Anne, and Raggedy Andy. They have the rhythm of plainchant, of paeans lifted up to Santa Claus. Silly Putty, Superballs, and Matchbox cars. Duncan yo-yos, paint-by-number sets, and 3-D viewers. Aggravation, Stratego, Trouble, and Operation. Etch-A-Sketches and Spirographs. Model spaceships, antique cars, and Billy Bishop's World War I biplanes. A German Fokker triplane I snapped the wheels off while trying to glue on the third wing.

I can't remember now exactly why I so desperately wanted Rockem Sockem Robots and A Barrel Full of Monkeys, Pivot Pool and Battleship, or anything made by Wham-O. Few of them came. We were not wealthy, and insofar as my parents held much of what passed for advanced ideas in those days, they believed in that vague kind of middle-American progressivism that expressed itself in Scandinavian furniture, subscriptions to the *New Yorker*, and "educational playthings." And of the few widely commercialized toys we did receive, none survive. Did they wear out? Were they victims of the brutal triage—the hurried abandoning of the incidental, the unnecessary, and the overlooked—that always happens just before the moving vans come? (Three moves is as good as a fire, my grandmother used to say—paraphrasing Ben Franklin, I learned years later.) Or were they simply too disappointing to care much about once they came: cleaner, sharper, more memorable to desire than to obtain?

In a box at the back of my closet, a few last things remain: odds and ends sent on to me in Washington by my mother, for the most part, as she came across them here and there in long-unopened moving cartons stacked in the basement or old shoe boxes hidden for years on the shelves behind the winter coats.

The desire for list-making is overwhelming, as though by careful inventory I could somehow draw again upon the feeling once invested, like a savings account, in those toys: a stuffed tiger, one eye askew, its ribbon shredding in age. (But where is the enormous bear my grandfather gave us when I was three, taller than either my sister or me?) A paperweight of Indian-head pennies mounted in clear plastic, a loose wheel off a model airplane, a small set of toy cars. A handful of mounted knights, the stones of their painted castle long since overgrown and tumbled down. A gold-braided military bandsman in a red tunic, the sole survivor of a regiment of plastic soldiers I once tried to march down the hall and across the living room of my grandparents' house in Rapid City during the middle of a party to raise money for Korczak Ziolkowski, the mad sculptor who was trying to carve an entire Black Hills mountain into a 500-foot-tall statue of Crazy Horse. When the first high heels and the huge black wing-tips of the lawyers and the businessmen came smashing down on the soldiers, Korczak suddenly stooped down and gathered me up on his lap, his stiff beard sweeping back and forth across my head while he laughed and drank, waving his arms and shouting at the guests to watch where they stepped until at last my grandmother took me up to bed.

But even the actual objects conjure up little more than the ghosts of how one remembers that it must have felt at the time. Curiously, the memory is a little stronger, the image a little firmer, in recollecting the buying of presents, rather than the getting: the simultaneous feeling of titanic generosity and utter miserliness, an endless calculation of love measured to the penny, and an irrecoverable sensation—the proud knowledge that one has, in a rage of magnanimity, squandered every cent, matched with the shameful awareness of just how paltry the result is. If I spent the extra $1.43 to buy my older sister the metal stands instead of the plastic to hold her dolls, it was at the well-understood cost of buy-

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ing the plastic tea set instead of the china for my younger sister. If I bought the Irish handkerchiefs for my grandfather, it was at the heart-breaking expense of the potholders for my mother. I've rarely judged anything as narrowly, and yet, even now, I'm not convinced that I shouldn't have gone with the taffy for Aunt Eleanor and saved the money the chocolates cost to buy for my grandmother the larger size of glass ornament.

When I was eight, I decided that what my nine-year-old sister needed was the savings bank I found on the discount counter of a junk store, a coconut shell carved in the shape of a beatnik monkey, complete with beret, sunglasses, and bongo drums. But then, five blocks from home, Scooter West's mother pulled over to offer me a ride. And it was while I was struggling to hold my packages, thank Mrs. West, and climb inside that I knocked the monkey against the car door and cracked it down the middle. The grief was so sudden and precise, the desire not to let Scooter's mother see me cry so strong, the look on my face, reflected in the window of her Buick, so perfectly preserved in memory, that I can almost relive that sorrow just by remembering it.

And the next year as well, I was almost in tears as I walked home, listening to the dry snow squeak beneath the black rubber overshoes my mother made us wear, and with nothing but a Christmas card to give her after the store where I'd planned to get her genuine rhinestone earrings closed earlier than I had expected on Christmas Eve. But while I was trudging past the almost-deserted Christmas-tree store in the Catholic school parking lot, a salesman suddenly leaned over the fence to ask if I wanted a wreath to take home. "I don't have enough money left," I said. "That's okay, kid," he answered. "We're closing up here. Give it to your mother. Tomorrow's Christmas."

It was all too much. By the time Christmas itself arrived, the season had taken us by the throats and shaken us into supine jelly. Who could stand against it? For that matter, who could stand it? The Advent calendars, the shopping, the candles, the bells. The cold wind that dried the snow to particles of ice and piled them in crusted drifts against the walls of the breezeway. The snips of wrapping paper tracked from room to room. The fallen bits of tinsel trailed along the carpet. The carols that began their ceaseless tintinnabulation the day after Thanksgiving and played until all capacity for emotion had been leached away: Joan Baez trilling "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and Burl Ives growling "The Friendly Beasts" and Peter, Paul, and Mary harmonizing a song whose title I can't remember, but it was about a shivering little boy who offers to share his only piece of bread with a gray-haired lady on Christmas Eve, and we would play it over and over again on the hi-fi in the basement.

Ever since Enrico Caruso was first pressed on one of those scratchy, one-sided 78s for Mr. Edison's new gramophone machine, nearly every musical performer has felt compelled to issue a Christmas album, and the sheer bulk of that music adds up to more than anyone could listen to in a thousand holidays. Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra remain perennial best-sellers, and Elvis Presley and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir still hold their own. But the music stores' discount bins tumble together Mantovani and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Tony Bennett and the Vienna Boys Choir, *Paul Revere and the Raiders Sing the Season* and *The Amazing Zamfir Plays Carols on His Pan Pipes*—together with Christmas anthologies from Muzak, Motown, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Grand Ole Opry.

I once bought a version of "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" performed on bagpipes, just to hear what it sounded like. By itself, it was enough to make all the Whos down in Whoville cheer that the Grinch stole their Christmas. But most of the traditional songs are traditional for a reason: they're sturdy enough to stand up to almost anything the Yuletide pits against them—Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, or a grade-school Christmas recital, or even my own adventures in shower-singing. (I pride myself on knowing Christmas carols' more-rarely sung verses—the bit about thorn-infestation in "Joy to the World," for instance—but these days I never get to those grimmer parts of holiday tunes before my wife knocks on the door to say the neighbors are complaining, again.)

Even when my sisters and I were children, the innumerable Christmas renditions would blend into such indistinction that we couldn't tell Don Ho's "*Mele Kalikimaka* is the thing to say / On a bright Hawaiian Christmas Day" from Nat King Cole's "*Buon Natale* in Italy / Means a Merry Christmas to you." By the end of the season, the carol-soundtracked Christmas rush had frazzled us into mad and maniacal elves. I remember my little sister nearly slicing off her ear in the hurry to finish up on Christmas Eve as she tried to curl a ribbon by running it across a scissors' blade, the way she had seen the lady at the Montgomery Ward gift-counter do. I remember my older sister snarling as she held together the ends of a package, waiting for the Elmer's glue to dry after the Scotch tape had run out.

Early in December, we were strong enough to take almost any amount of sentimentality in the stories our parents read to us nightly: Henry van Dyke's "The Other Wise Man," Kate Douglas Wiggin's "Romance of a Christmas Card," even my father's welshifying his way through Dylan Thomas' "A Child's Christmas in Wales." By the last week of Advent, the mere word "Christmas" could send us howling from the room.

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Dickens' energy and facetiousness leavened *A Christmas Carol* enough to make it bearable. "Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail," the first paragraph ends—to which the second paragraph adds: "Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for."

But our favorite as the holiday approached was William Dean Howells' "Christmas Every Day," a story about a little girl whose wish that it always be Christmas is granted by a fairy, to horrible effect. "After it had gone on about three or four months, the little girl, whenever she came into the room in the morning and saw those great ugly, lumpy stockings dangling at the fireplace, and the disgusting presents around everywhere, used to sit down and burst out crying. In six months she was perfectly exhausted, she couldn't even cry anymore."

Years later, I was lost in my American Literature classes, for I always thought of Howells as a funny writer and expected to laugh my way through *The Rise of Silas Lapham* and *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. By Thanksgiving, Howells' narrator explains, "people didn't carry presents around nicely anymore. They flung them over the fence or through the window, and, instead of taking great pains to write 'For dear Papa,' or 'Mama,' or 'Brother,' or 'Sister,' they used to write, 'Take it, you horrid old thing!' and then go and bang it against the front door."

Many of these were *St. Nicholas* stories. Begun in 1873 and continuing until 1939, the monthly *St. Nicholas Magazine for Boys and Girls* was a dominant American publication in my grandparents' and great-grandparents' time. Under the editorship of Mary Mapes Dodge, the magazine printed the first works of everyone from Jack London to Eudora Welty. Stephen Vincent Benet, Rachel Carson, Bennett Cerf, Ring Lardner, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sterling North, and Cornelia Otis Skinner all appeared as child writers in its pages, and its adult authors included Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Theodore Roosevelt, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and Richard Harding Davis.

Like the *Junior Classics*—another icon of that bygone era, with introductions by Harvard's president, Charles W. Eliot, no less—*St. Nicholas* wanted most of all to instill the nation's moral vocabulary in the young. Dodge insisted the magazine's writers aim "To give clean, genuine fun to children of all ages. To give them examples of the finest types of boyhood and girlhood. . . . To foster a love of country, home, nature, truth, beauty, and sincerity. To prepare boys and girls for life as it is," and "To stimulate their ambitions—but along normally progressive lines."

Noble editorial goals, no doubt, and we loved my mother's battered 1960s reprint of *The St. Nicholas Anthology*, a book-length collection chosen by Henry Steele Commager (whose name signals just how established an institution the magazine had been). But some of those *St. Nicholas* stories proved that for sheer, unadulterated pap, you just can't compete with the good, old-fashioned normally progressive lines.

There was, for instance, an 1885 story by Sophie Swett, called "How Santa Claus Found the Poor-House," about an orphan boy who didn't give up easily. "You might have known that he wouldn't give up easily," Swett points out, "by one glance at his sturdy little figure, at his bright, wide-open eyes, his firm mouth, and his square, prominent chin; even the little, turned-up end of his nose looked resolute." When I was eight or nine, the failure of my little figure to look sufficiently sturdy and resolute caused some comment from my older sister when we were sent out to shovel the driveway—to which I usually responded by mentioning her own deficiencies in the little-upturned-nose department, and we would end up rolling on the ground, trying to stuff snow down each other's back. I doubt that's what Dodge, Swett, and Commager had in mind.

Not that we didn't have our share of true Dickensianism—the boisterous stream that runs from Joseph Addison and Washington Irving, through the *Pickwick Papers*' Dingley Dell, and down to G. K. Chesterton's beery vision of food and drink and Christmas cheer. My father always insisted on an early Christmas breakfast, a huge feast of eggs poached in milk, and bacon and hashbrowns and pancakes and marmalade and grapefruit and a sort of sweetened toast whose name I can't remember, but it tasted like corrugated cardboard with cinnamon and sugar sprinkled on top.

And then, after that groaning meal, nothing. No lunch, no snack, no Christmas gingerbread, no nuts, no fruit. None of the fancy chocolate a cousin sent every year from San Francisco, none of the *bûche de Noël* my college-aged sister taught us to make when she came back from her junior year in France with her bangs cut at a Parisian angle and her diary filled with recipes. Nothing until two o'clock, or three, or four, or, one year, even five, when the ravenous aunts had begun to snip at each other in hunger, and the starved uncles were arguing in the living room about how many terms Sigurd Anderson had been governor, and the children—past the wheedling stage, past the whining stage, past the stage of sitting on the kitchen floor and weeping for food—were crouched together on the sofa, dumb with misery.

But then at last the kitchen door would swing open in a blast of steam and smoke and relief. And the dining-room table would fill with a turkey or a goose, rolls and

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salad and green beans, little glass bowls of watermelon pickles with tiny three-pronged forks beside them, and cranberries plopped whole in sugared water, boiled until they started to burst, then set aside to cool. "You see," my father explained every year as we sat down to eat, "this is the way to do it: a big breakfast to stretch your stomach, then no lunch, so by dinner time you're really ready for a full Christmas meal."

They can't have all been there the same year, but my memory puts together on the table sweet potatoes and yams, butternut squash and the white potatoes mashed with milk and butter that—in one of those family traditions by which chores get divvied up—we were told only Uncle Hugo could make well. But there was always the onion-and-breadcrumb dressing into which my father dumped two, three, four white tins of dried sage, sneaking back into the kitchen to add more when he thought no one was looking.

And then there were pies: made from pieces of cooked pumpkin kept in the freezer since October, apples up from the cellar, Mason jars of mincemeat. The food was more enormous than it was complicated. The only elaborate thing I remember my mother making for Christmas was an aspic, a sort of clarified gelatin made from a consommé of veal bones and flavored with tomatoes. I have no idea where she got the idea—South Dakota didn't run much to that sort of cooking—but she would spend hours working on it.

I can't describe how much we hated that aspic. It looked like horror-movie gore, and it tasted like tomato-juice Jell-O. Every year, the relatives would ooh and aah as it was brought triumphantly on a platter to the table, and the crisis of the children's refusal to eat it would escalate from parental glares to harsh whispers to my father banging the table and forbidding us to have dessert until we finished our portions. At last, while our parents snuck out to the porch to recover their nerves, our favorite uncle would pick up our untouched plates along with his own and head off to the kitchen, whistling. He couldn't stand the stuff either.

After dinner, there was champagne for the adults, and eggnog and fruit cake, if anyone had room left for anything, and wood to add to the fireplace, and the annual crisis of fumbling in the basement with a flashlight when a bad bulb on the tree flared out and blew the fuse. There were giant Springbok jigsaw puzzles, and bridge if my grandmother was insistent, or one of the new board games to play with the visiting cousins. When I was very young, there were uncles to beg into lighting, one more time, the candles on the miraculous little machine that caught the rising heat of the flames to spin a fan that whirled around small brass angels with long wands, ringing miniature bells with each revolution. And then there were books, and more books, and yet more books—until everything we had wanted Christmas to be seemed present in the dead of those cold winters.

And yet, the fulfillment of expectation comes with a disappointment all its own. By the end of Christmas Day, we were satisfied—and sated: drained of wonder and prone to a reaction against the overindulgence, the replete, in a season of charity. This was in the days before the nation surrendered to its secular, store-bought fate, the era when every newspaper in America ran an editorial sometime during the season bemoaning the commercialization of Christmas.

Ours was a sterner, more puritanical objection, however. We did not lack the religious meaning of Christmas; we had church goings and Bible readings, candles and Advent calendars, angels on the tree and carols insisting He was born that man no more may die. But we had something else as well, something that turned us away in an odd distaste on Christmas afternoon from the explosion of opened presents, ribbons spread across the floor, and bright balls of crumpled wrapping paper, red and green—the living room transformed into Ali Baba's cave or Hollywood's vision of a bandits' lair.

I remember bundling up and going out for air after Christmas dinner the year I was sixteen. Trudging along the lip of the white-dusted gully on the edge of Pierre, I looked out to see the land, like a cold sea stretching off to the horizon. Cities on the ocean have a choice whether to turn their faces or their backs to the water, lining the shore either with pretty hotels and rich homes or dim warehouses, narrow streets, and greasy piers. All prairie towns turn away from the prairie, however. The huddled houses form a storm-battened island in the midst of endless space.

But sometimes in winter, I could sense something else in that cold, blank range—or, rather, *nothing* else, emptiness itself like a positive force, an overwhelmingly present absence: purer than we were, cleaner, truer to God's purposes, more real. Once, years later, I felt it again. It was near midnight, while I driving along Highway 14 from Minnesota across the state to Pierre in the old rust-orange Ford pickup my father had given me. Expecting to see the lights of the car that had followed me from Brookings to Huron, I glanced into the rearview mirror and saw . . . nothing—the absolute nothing, a darkness from before creation. It was like falling into deep water at night, and before I awoke I was off the highway, the gravel clattering in the wheel-wells and the weeds snapping off as they tore against the fenders.

The prairie in December is brutal and indifferent, but that sated Christmas I was sixteen—with presents back home spilling off the sofa, the annual racecar-track looped in a figure-8 beneath the tree, too many new books and boxes of candy, the mothball odor of the Christmas linen and the cloying scent of the

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juniper branches—I perceived, in some confused adolescent's way, the spirit's harrowing side. *I came to cast fire upon the earth,* as the Gospel says, *and would that it were already kindled!* There was a burned-over purity to that frozen landscape, an icy clarity to its ash-white slate. There was an escape from the mess and clutter of our overpopulated Christmas desires, ruined by their secular attainment. To stand along the prairie's rim was to understand the impatient truth that where man is, the divine is not—to know that God lives apart from people.

At other times, I have been forced to learn the opposite truth. Late afternoon on Christmas Eve, the year that I was eleven, my father took me with him across the river. I can't remember what the urgency was, but he was a busy lawyer, and he needed some papers signed by a rancher who lived across on the other side of the Missouri from Pierre. So off we headed, west over the bridge and north through the river hills.

If you've never seen that South Dakota country in winter, you have no idea how desolate land can be. I once asked my grandmother why her father had decided to stop his wagon-trek in what became the town where she was born. And she answered, in surprise I didn't know, "Because that's where the tree was." The empty hills were frozen dry, as my father and I drove along, with sharp ice crystals blowing up from the knots of cold, gray grass.

Now, we were supposed to stay only a minute or two, get a signature, and turn back for home. But you can't pay a visit in South Dakota, especially at Christmas, without facing food—endless besieging armies of it, and usually the worst of American holiday cuisine: Jell-O molds with carrot shavings, chocolate-packet pies, neon-pink hams pricked to death with cloves and drowned in honey. If you've never seen one of those prairie tables, you have no idea how desolate food can be.

From the moment she spotted us turning off the highway, Mrs. Harmon must have been piling the table. I remember eating cinnamon buns crusted with sugar while Mr. Harmon and his two tall sons told us about the coyote tracks they'd found that morning. It was the cold that made the coyotes risk it, scenting the trash cans, probably, and the livestock had been skittish all day. But then Mrs. Harmon began to shout, "Jim, Jim, the horses are out." And in a tangle of arms and jackets, we poured out to herd back the frightened animals.

By the time we were done, however, four expensive quarter-horses were loose on the prairie. Cursing, Mr. Harmon climbed into his pickup and headed north along the highway, while my father drove off to the south. Mrs. Harmon took it more calmly. She went inside to telephone the neighbors, and the boys began to saddle three horses to ride out and look.

You have to understand the significance of that third horse, for it marks the difference between town and country—even a small town surrounded by country, like Pierre. The Harmons simply assumed an eleven-year-old boy was old enough to help, while my mother would have pitched a fit at my riding out on the prairie alone, a few hours from sundown, in the middle of winter.

In fact, there was little chance of getting lost. I knew, more or less, how to ride, and the highway was in sight much of the time. Still, as the land grew colder and darker, the excitement faded, leaving only brittle determination, a boy's will not to be the first to turn back.

I can't have ridden far through the Christmas hills—maybe three or four miles—when I came over a rise and spotted one of the horses, skittering in front of a worn farmhouse. Standing in the yard was a woman, a rope in one hand and her other hand held up empty toward the horse. She was hatless and tiny, hardly bigger than I was, with a man's heavy riding coat hanging down below her knees, the sleeves turned back to show the faded lining, and she seemed very old to me. Yellow light streamed out on the cold ground from the one lit window of the house.

As I rode down, she waved me back, talking to the horse in the gentlest, lightest patter, as though nothing much had ever been wrong, really, and, anyway, everything was all right, now. He bobbed back and forth, nearer and nearer, until he touched her open hand with his steaming nose and she eased the loop over his neck.

"Bea Harmon called," she said, handing me the rope, "and told me you were all out looking for this boy. They often come to me, you know. He'll go along quietly now."

Her eyes were quick and black. "I don't see many people, here about," she chirruped, like a winter bird. "Come in and get warm. I'll make some coffee. No, you're a little young for coffee. I'll put some water on for tea, and there're the cookies I made in case someone came by." But I was proud of bringing back one of the strays and wouldn't wait. I shied away from her outstretched hand and galloped back.

Sometimes you catch sight of a turn leading off into the distance, a dirt track or a county road at right angles to the highway you're on, as you drive along those straight, miles-long lines you find only in the West. And you know you'll never go up it, never come back to find where it leads, and always there remains a sense, as you roll past, that maybe this time you should have turned and followed that track up into the distant hills.

Her hair was the same thin shade of gray as the weather-beaten pickets of the fence around her frozen garden. She had a way with horses, and she was alone on Christmas Eve.

There is little in my life I regret as much as that I would not stay for just one cookie, just one cup of tea. FT

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Books In Review

"We the Protestants"

Separation of Church and State. By Philip Hamburger. *Harvard University Press. 492 pp. $49.95.*

***Reviewed by* Stephen F. Smith**

During last year's commencement exercises at the University of Virginia, every graduate received a fancy compendium of excerpts from Thomas Jefferson's most notable writings, including the Declaration of Independence and the famous Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. These sources suggest that Jefferson regarded the founding of the American nation, and the essential character of the polity "We the People" created, as religiously motivated acts, not simply applied Lockean social contract theory. To this extent, at least, the public square was not "naked"—or so it might seem.

As University of Chicago law professor Philip Hamburger ably demonstrates in *Separation of Church and State*, the matter is actually far less benign than the picture the University of Virginia graduates were given. An avalanche of private correspondence contradicts the religiosity Jefferson sometimes projected, and reveals a Jefferson who was deeply hostile to organized religion. Using imagery Protestants typically reserved for the pope, Jefferson described the Protestant clergy as "the real Antichrist." To Jefferson, Protestant denominations were no better than the Roman Catholic Church: all stood as enemies of mental freedom, and all were therefore anathema to lovers of liberty and—the true Supreme Being for Jefferson—"Reason."

It was this anticlerical Jefferson who, as President, responded to an 1801 petition from a group of dissenting Baptists seeking relief from non-Baptist religious establishments in Connecticut. The Danbury Baptist Association argued for neutrality in religious matters: the government should not favor any church over another, enforce any religious duties, or discriminate among citizens on account of their religious beliefs. Jefferson's letter in response argued for a very different concept—a "wall of separation between Church & State"—that, according to him, was enshrined in the First Amendment. Almost a century and a half later, in *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947), the Supreme Court officially adopted Jefferson's "wall of separation" as the bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment.

As Hamburger skillfully shows, Jefferson's wall of separation was shockingly radical in the early 1800s. Neither the First Amendment nor state constitutions were written or understood in terms of a separation of church and state. The novelty was advertent on Jefferson's part because he intended to *change* prevailing notions of religious liberty and to impose new limits on the power of the clergy. It was only decades later, after an anti-Christian secular movement to amend the Constitution to require separation had failed, that proponents of separation pulled Jefferson's "interpretation" from the dust bin of history.

Hamburger carefully dissects founding-era debates concerning various religious matters, such as clerical eligibility for government office. Contemporary advocates of separation try to derive historical support for their project from those debates, but Hamburger convincingly shows that such efforts are completely ahistorical. Not only did the dissenters not argue for or desire separation, but separation simply was not part of the national debate until well into the 1800s.

In the eighteenth century, separation served only as a "straw man" argument by defenders of American religious establishments. Portraying religious dissenters as favoring separation was an effective, if disingenuous, rhetorical tactic because it was so widely accepted by Americans that church and state occupied cooperative relationships. A democracy could not function without a virtuous people, and churches inculcated the virtues necessary for self-government. Far from challenging this linkage between church and state or arguing for a naked public square, then, dissenters sought only the repeal of establishments and other forms of religious discrimination.

The less than ebullient reaction of the Danbury Baptists to Jefferson's missive illustrates the point. Having solicited President Jefferson's support, they promptly buried his letter, neither publicizing it nor even recording its receipt in the Association's minutes. Instead of endorsing separation, the Danbury Baptists continued to make the traditional disestablishment arguments, convinced, as many early Americans were, that separating church from state was not only misguided, but inconsistent with Christian social action.

If the wall of separation was so out of step with American beliefs, why has it become so widely accepted over the years? This question turns out to be the central conundrum of Hamburger's book. By the time separation achieved critical mass during the second half of the nineteenth century, the establishments of old had long since died out. Why, then, was the country so quick to embrace, often with religious fervor, the notion that separation of church and state is a necessary precondition of religious liberty?

Hamburger's answer is as compelling as it is chilling: anti-Catholic

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bigotry is what drove the triumph of separation. Of course, Protestant animus against Catholics was nothing new in America. What was new was that American Catholics were growing in number and influence. In the first half of the nineteenth century, waves of Catholic immigrants came to America from Ireland and Germany and settled in big-city metropolises, such as New York, to the great alarm of native-born Protestants.

In the hordes of immigrants, "nativist" Protestants saw mindless hordes controlled by the "Roman dictator" who sat atop the Catholic Church. These nativist Protestants feared that the pope was poised to capture control of the government and forcibly convert non-Catholics. These fears assumed a fever pitch in 1832 when Pope Gregory XVI denounced separation of church and state, prompting Tocqueville to remark that across America "the Catholic religion has erroneously been looked upon as the natural enemy of democracy."

ONCE THAT CLEAR and present danger to freedom was identified, it was obvious that drastic steps had to be taken. Vigilantism was one common response. There were waves of mob violence against Catholics, and churches and convents (mocked as "nunneries") were burned. Another response was to deny Catholics political power. Nativists argued that Catholics lacked the mental freedom required for political equality, with the "Know Nothings," for example, swearing their members to vote against "all . . . Roman Catholics." In fact, a constitutional amendment was proposed to empower Congress to abolish the Catholic Church as a "foreign hierarchical power . . . founded on principles or dogmas antagonistic to republican institutions."

It was during this period of anti-Catholic animus that popular conceptions of American religious liberty were redefined in terms of separation. The courts soon followed suit. In *Reynolds v. United States* (1878), a case rejecting a claim that it was unconstitutional to prosecute Mormons for polygamy, the Supreme Court accepted Jefferson's "wall of separation" letter as the "authoritative" interpretation of the First Amendment. State courts at this time, decades before *Everson*, began enforcing separation as a state constitutional principle.

Although there is no inherent sectarian bias in the concept of separation, Hamburger demonstrates that separation was used for anti-Catholic purposes in the nineteenth century.

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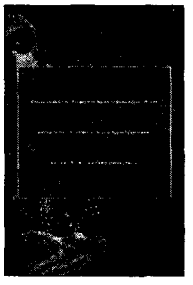

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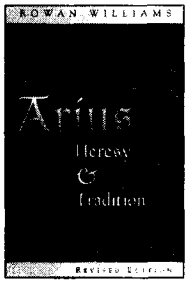

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Believing that they, unlike Catholics, acted as "individuals," not a "church," Protestants did not understand separation to prevent them from taking their religious beliefs into the public square. Consequently, it was deemed proper, for example, to teach nonsectarian Protestantism, anti-Catholic propaganda, and the King James Bible in public schools. The wall of separation was breached only when Catholics sought, in effect, school vouchers for parochial schools to escape Protestant indoctrination in public schools. These Catholic claims prompted state constitutional amendments nationwide dictating that public funds for education could not be controlled by "any religious sect," language carefully chosen to halt the Catholic drive while preserving public school instruction in nonsectarian Protestantism.

In this sense, "We the People" who had the God-given right of religious liberty under the Constitution became "We the Protestants." Religious freedom was guaranteed to Protestants by a doctrine—separation of church and state—that was intended to deny that same freedom to Catholics. As Bishop John Hughes of New York noted in 1835: "Under the pretense of solicitude for the preservation of civil and religious liberty, the Catholics are to be robbed of both."

There is an interesting irony in the developments Hamburger traces. Protestants responded to the rising Catholic tide by embracing separation but, in doing so, inadvertently undermined the moral authority of their own churches. If it was wrong for the pope to "tell" Catholics what to believe, were not Protestant clergymen who exercised spiritual authority the "Protestant Popedom" Jefferson had condemned? This anticlerical thinking gave rise to a theologically liberal brand of Protestantism, whose adherents were receptive to demands from atheists, liberals, and secular Jews for total separation.

The rest, as they say, is history, albeit history that proponents of separation, for obvious reasons, are quite content to leave untold. Nativist groups, including the Know Nothings and the Ku Klux Klan, enthusiastically adopted the anti-Catholic conception of separation. A Klan-inspired movement, supported by anti-Christian secularists, prompted passage in the 1920s of compulsory public school education laws intended to take Catholics out of parochial schools and "Americanize" them. As the success

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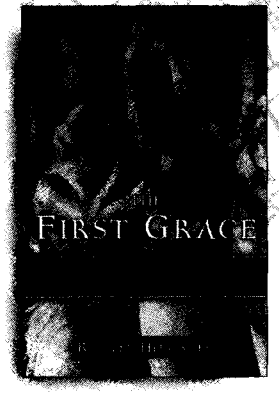

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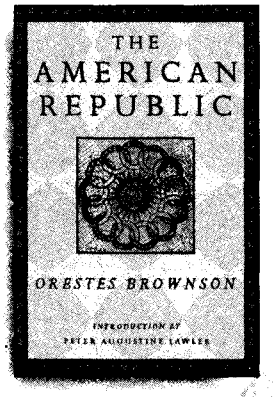

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of this movement suggests, nativist sentiments had become pervasive among Americans from all walks of life, spreading into groups that were not officially nativist. One example of these groups is the Freemasons, which Catholics were forbidden to join on pain of excommunication under the 1917 Code of Canon Law, based in part on the view that Masons "plot[ted] against the Church."

In 1947, all nine Supreme Court Justices—at least seven of whom were Masons—agreed in *Everson v. Board of Education* that the Constitution required separation. The majority opinion was written by Justice Hugo Black, former Klansman and Senator from Alabama. He had distinguished himself in politics as someone who, in the words of an admiring Klan leader, could "make the best anti-Catholic speech you ever heard." Ironically, the Court, by a 5-4 vote, upheld a law granting Catholic parents reimbursement for school bus fare on terms equal to other parents. Black certainly understood that voting to uphold the law might dampen criticism of his Klan background. Somewhat controversially, Hamburger suggests that Black may have voted strategically to accomplish that result. In either case, the point, I take it, is not that Klan or Masonic affiliations led the Court to embrace separation, but rather that the nativist assumptions and anti-Catholic biases held by Klansmen and many Masons were shared by many well-intentioned people at the time, both on and off the Court.

Although Jefferson's musings about separation had thus become the law of the land, it was not the kind of separation the nativists had wanted. To their chagrin, Protestants also found themselves trapped behind Jefferson's wall because the Court enforced it against *all* religions, not just Catholicism. The Court also ruled that separation forbids the government from favoring "religion" over "nonreligion" (*Epperson v. Arkansas* [1968]), meaning that even nondenominational support for religion was constitutionally suspect. In a series of grant-in-aid cases, the Court held that students in religious schools had to be denied benefits offered to students in nonreligious private schools. So, for example, on-site remedial educational services could be provided to disadvantaged children enrolled in private schools, but not their counterparts in religious schools (*Aguilar v. Felton* [1985]). This untoward result—interpreting a Constitution intended to guarantee religious liberty as requiring affirmative discrimination against people of faith—would seem to be the necessary result of a doctrine of separation that invalidates government action that lacks a "secular purpose" or has the effect of "advanc[ing] . . . religion" (*Lemon v. Kurtzman* [1970]).

FORTUNATELY, the Supreme Court has, of late, come to recognize the anomaly of its separation jurisprudence. Although the Court has not rejected the wall of separation, it has lowered the wall fairly dramatically, moving steadily away from the pernicious view that separation requires discrimination against religion. In *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia* (1995), for example, the Court ruled that Jefferson's university could not deny student aid funding to a Christian student magazine. Additionally, the Court, overruling *Aguilar* and similar cases, has held that where services are provided to private school students, students in religious schools can also receive those benefits (see *Mitchell v. Helms* [2000]; *Agostini v. Fenton* [1997]). Just last term, the Court upheld the use of school vouchers even if parents elect to use them to send their children to religious schools (*Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* [2002]).

Arguably the most powerful voice in the recent assault on separation has been Justice Clarence Thomas. His plurality opinion in *Mitchell* declared that, in the educational context, strict

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separation was "born of bigotry" and thus "should be buried now." Incidentally, Thomas was educated by nuns in parochial schools and graduated from Holy Cross. Maybe the nativists were onto something about those Catholic schools after all.

The Anti-Gnostic

Eric Voegelin: The Restoration of Order. By Michael P. Federici. *ISI. 250 pp. $24.95.*

***Reviewed by* Glenn Tinder**

First, the basics: born in Germany in 1901, Eric Voegelin received a doctorate in political science from the University of Vienna, carried on several years of postdoctoral study in England, America, and France, and then took up an academic career in Austria. He drew the hostility of the Nazis with two early works on race, and in 1938 he fled to America, where he taught for many years, mainly at Louisiana State University. He ended his professional career at the Hoover Institution and died in 1985.

Voegelin wrote voluminously and is known today for two works in particular. One, quite short, is an erudite and powerfully argued effort to shift political science from positivist to transcendental, or "religious," foundations (*The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* [1952]). The other (*Order and History* [1956-1987]), which is much longer and generally seen as his major work, is a five-volume study of the rise and development of human awareness of divine transcendence, and of the resulting order in the soul and society; the first three volumes concentrate on ancient Israel and Greece, while the last two reach toward the modern world.

Glenn Tinder *is author of* The Political Meaning of Christianity *(1989) and* The Fabric of Hope *(2000).*

Eric Voegelin: The Restoration of Order by Michael P. Federici is a brief and lucid introduction to Voegelin's main ideas. While the author is cognizant of possible weaknesses in Voegelin's thought, his aim is not to write a critique. Nor is it to offer a new interpretation of Voegelin's intentions or accomplishments. Rather, his book represents an effort to illuminate Voegelin's philosophy as a whole and to do this in terms readily understandable (as Voegelin's terms sometimes are not) to the general reader. This is Voegelin made accessible.

Voegelin is an imposing, and at the same time puzzling, figure in modern thought. He is imposing for several reasons. He was a scholar of vast learning. He possessed an expert's knowledge of Near-Eastern civilizations, carried out studies of ancient Israel that commanded respect from Old Testament scholars, and wrote two probing volumes on the institutions and literature of ancient Greece. With a mastery of all relevant languages, he was at home in the entire history of political philosophy. In the next-to-last volume of *Order and History* he even extended his gaze to China, displaying his usual scholarly care and competence.

He was not only a scholar, however. He was also a thinker, and in his research was always philosophically reflective, looking not only for truth about the past but also for truth about human nature and the human condition. Whether or not he originated any one great idea, he was unquestionably an original mind. His vocabulary, his method, and his angle of vision were distinctively his own. There is no one quite like him in the intellectual world of the twentieth century.

Finally, Voegelin is imposing in the steadiness and tenacity of his tran-

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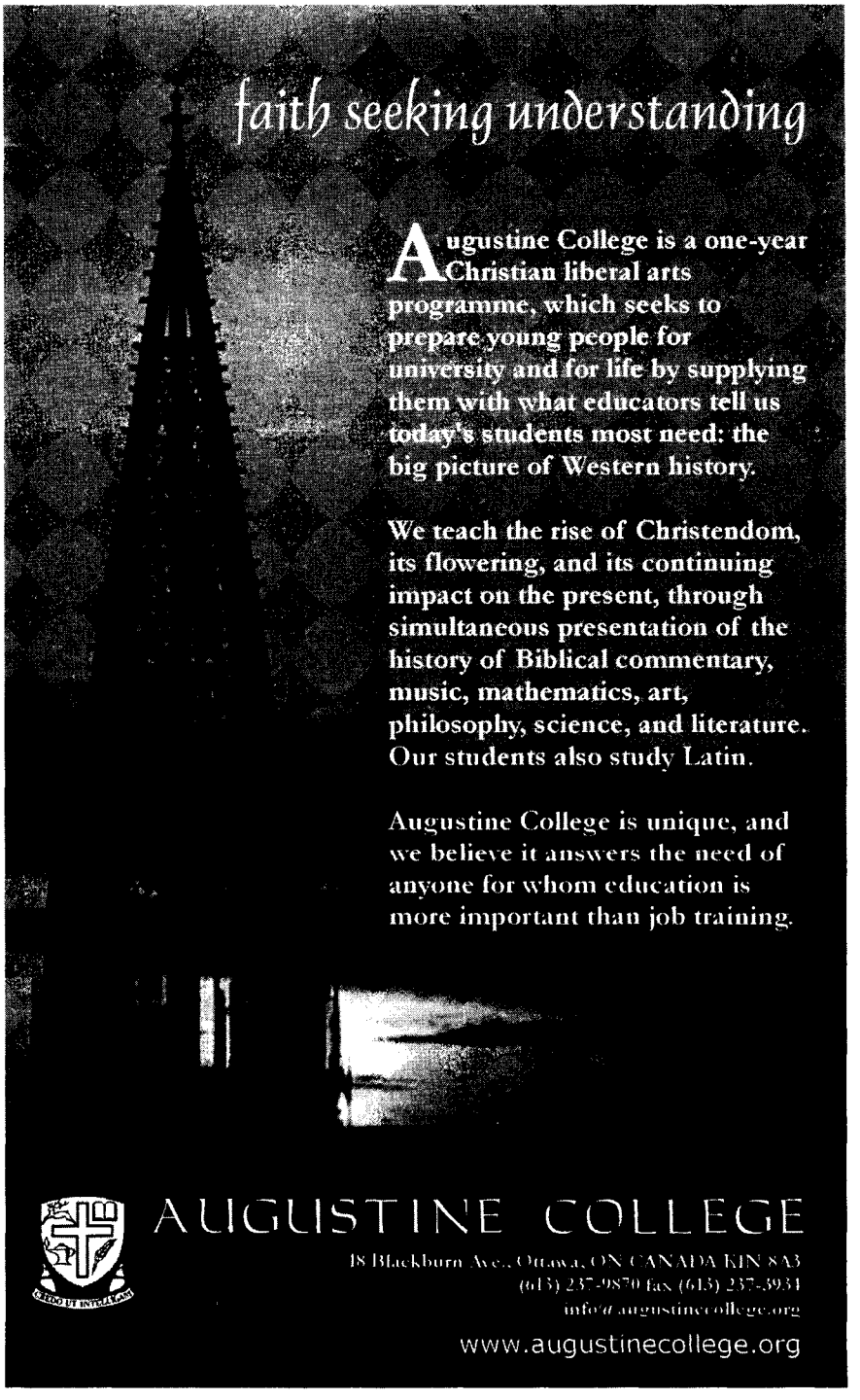
scendental orientation. For all the range and diversity of his interests, it can be fairly said that he devoted his mature life to the search for transcendence. In a manner reminiscent of France's great Catholic thinker Gabriel Marcel, he understood man's vocation to be the task of entering into the mystery of being. For Voegelin, as for Marcel, this mystery could not be captured in an ontology, which would only objectify and thus destroy it. We can, however, study human consciousness, where we find an intrinsic drive toward transcendence. The true order of the soul, as Voegelin put it, lies in its "existential tension toward the ground."

Voegelin's breadth of vision is evident in the fact that these concerns were always placed in the context of history. Humans discover their humanity only in the course of time and through the progress of philosophical and religious understanding. The greatest historical achievements, however, are not those that are conspicuous to any eye. They are events of philosophical inquiry and of religious revelation—events through which humanity becomes attuned to the mystery of being.

But, as noted, Voegelin is also puzzling. This is because he does not quite fit the categories we ordinarily use in mapping out the intellectual universe. Thus, for example, many readily think of him as a philosopher. Yet on the basis of *Order and History*, he appears to be an *historian* of philosophy rather than a philosopher pure and simple. None of the great philosophers, with the possible exception of Hegel, devoted themselves to the history of philosophy. Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein: all knew something of the history of philosophy (although Wittgenstein evidently very little); none were historians of philosophy. Blurring the distinction between philosophy and the history of philosophy risks confusing philosophical reflection with scholarly research and wisdom with erudition.

Voegelin's political views, too, are difficult to classify. Even to put him on the side of constitutional democracy, while not false, is not very revealing. As the title of his major work makes clear, he was preoccupied with order. Yet he may leave readers unclear as to his definition of good order. As a refugee from Nazism, he was decidedly opposed to totalitarianism, and in mid-career spent some years at the University of Munich with the reported aim of instilling in the



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German mind an allegiance to constitutional democracy. Yet in *Plato and Aristotle*, the third volume of *Order and History*, he is strikingly uncritical of Plato, whose work, for all of its spiritual grandeur, was arguably in tension with the open society.

Voegelin also defies the usual ideological classifications. Aspects of his thought will appeal to conservatives. He was profoundly hostile to revolutionary movements of the kind that began with the French Revolution. He was a principled opponent of both ideology and political activism. Yet Voegelin did not call himself a conservative, and he spoke of conservatism as simply another ideology. He paid little attention to Burke and did not embrace the cardinal proposition of classical conservatism: that tradition can effectively embody and safeguard human wisdom.

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VOEGELIN'S HOSTILITY toward ideology and revolutionary action flows from his concept of gnosticism—one of the most widely known and debated of his ideas. The ancient gnostic movement was characterized by a radical dualism. The world was not merely fallen from God but was the creation of an evil God. This perception led directly to the project of escaping from the world, and gnostics typically saw such an escape as possible through a secret but teachable knowledge (*gnosis*) in the possession of the spiritual elite. Voegelin sensed that this unwillingness to submit to the structure of reality, and to bear the evils of the world, was a kind of spiritual disease, one that arose again in the Middle Ages and spread into modern times. It affected most modern political thinkers and movements, and, in his view, became the very essence of modernity. Modern gnosticism differed from ancient gnosticism in one crucial sense, however: rather than promoting escape from the world, it called for transformation of the world through human action. It was thus a revolt not only against the structure of things but against transcendence itself.

Voegelin's interpretation of gnosticism provides a dramatic way of conceptualizing the history of political thought and even of Western culture. It echoes, although it does not really reproduce, the Judeo-Christian concept of human fallenness. And it accounts for the way in which the rejection of transcendence and the assertion of human mastery have shaped modern history. But at the same time, the gnostic theme can be another source of puzzlement.

One difficulty has to do with the relationship between the political and revolutionary activism of modern gnosticism and the otherworldliness and political detachment of its ancient variety. Can the same name be applied to both movements without creating confusion? Likewise, Voegelin applies the concept so broadly that it seems to take in almost everything—and thus tell us next to nothing at all. Puritanism, positivism, progressivism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, communism, and fascism were all, in Voegelin's eyes, gnostic or seriously infected with gnosticism. The same is true of minds as diverse as Isaiah, Joachim of Fiore, Hobbes, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Hitler. Voegelin was even led to suggest that liberalism and totalitarianism, so commonly regarded in our times as polar opposites, were both fundamentally forms of gnosticism. Readers can wonder whether so all-inclusive a category does not obscure vital differences.

ON THE ISSUE OF Voegelin and Christianity, he can be considered a Christian only with qualifications so severe as almost to nullify the characterization. He reportedly spoke of himself in conversation as a Christian, and in his writings he occasionally seemed to express a Christian allegiance. Eugene Webb, a well-known authority on Voegelin, states unequivocally that he was a Christian, although an unorthodox one. Yet Voegelin writes critically, although vaguely and briefly, of the doctrines both of the Trinity and the dual nature of Christ. Jesus receives hardly any attention in *Order and History*, and Paul receives only brief—and not entirely favorable—attention. Christ is certainly not the axis of history for him. If anything plays that role it is the discovery of transcendence in ancient Israel and Greece. Although Voegelin was keenly aware of how "the existential tension toward the ground" could be distorted and stifled, this is hardly the same as the concept of original sin. And if there is any idea in his writings of justification by faith, it is apt to escape the notice of most Christian readers. In sum, even though he was absorbed by the spiritual crisis of modern man—a crisis he traced back to the ancient gnostic movement—it can hardly be said that he viewed history in a Christian fashion, that is, as a drama of sin and redemption.

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Voegelin planned to devote the final two volumes of *Order and History* to Christianity, carrying forward into the Catholic and Protestant centuries the spiritual advance begun in ancient Israel and Greece. That would have produced a single story encapsulating the major spiritual developments in the West. However, by the time he began work on Volume IV (which had been tentatively entitled *Empire and Christianity*), Voegelin had come to feel that the past could not be comprehended within a unilinear account. Historical analysis had to move sideways as well as forward, he claimed. It is not easy to know, from the evidence of the final two volumes, just what this means, and whether it produces history in the usual sense of the term.

There is a greatness to Voegelin, but also a singularity that makes him difficult to comprehend. That he is worthy of study is not open to doubt. Federici's book is a splendid place to begin.

Block that Metaphor!

Economics as Religion: From Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond. By Robert Nelson. *Pennsylvania State University Press. 378 pp. $35.*

***Reviewed by* Robert A. Sirico**

Economics, as a social science, occupies a peculiar space within academic and national life. Economists deal with acting, choosing human persons, and their behavior in the most fickle area of life, the commercial marketplace; yet economists employ mathematical devices drawn from physics and the hard sciences. Unlike hard scientists, they are not content to study and discover what is given and seek improvements only within this constrained framework. Economists also see themselves, in the words of that old progressive Thorstein Veblen, as "keepers of the community's material welfare." They thus employ every manner of value and moral judgment in the practice of their science.

Those who doubt this reality should examine any issue of the top economics journals, wherein the reader finds myriad pieces discussing topics such as wealth distribution, discrimination, the moral integrity of the environment, justice, and power. Whereas mathematical methods are

Robert A. Sirico *is President of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty.*

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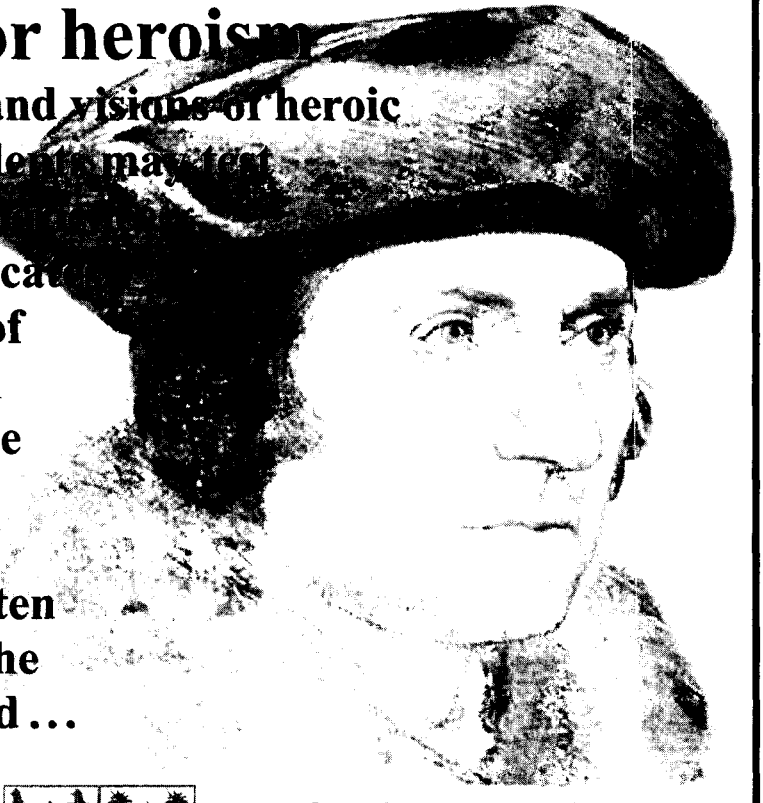
explicitly taught and defended, the implicit value judgments adopted by the profession are rarely questioned and often not even admitted by the authors. Nor is this a new trend. Examining the history of economic science, one finds that moral claims and value judgments concerning the human condition have always played an important role in its intellectual development.

Observing this fact, Robert Nelson attempts to strip away some of the scientific pretensions of the profession and treat (as he puts it in his title) *Economics as Religion.* Economists, he claims, "serve as the priesthood of a modern secular religion of economic progress that serves many of the same functions in contemporary society as early Christian and other religions did in their time."

Nelson makes a very strong claim, asserting that economics has its own moral system, priesthood, exoteric and esoteric teachings, a social agenda, a means of social salvation, a vision of what constitutes paradise, and precise prescriptions and injunctions concerning how to get there. His point is that economics has chosen this path as a means of enforcing its own internal belief system and asserting its influence in the social and political world. Not just one school has embraced religious forms of argument and legitimation—all of them have, from the early Progressives, to the Keynesians, to the Chica-

The education for heroism

makes available models and visions of heroic action against which students may test their own actions and ex[illegible] As Jacques Maritain indicat[illegible] poetry "is the secret life of each and all the arts": all the disciplines are in some sense translations of a common *poetic* insight, an intuitive source too often ignored or forgotten by the rationalistic, secular mind . . .



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go School, to the New Classical and Neoclassicals.

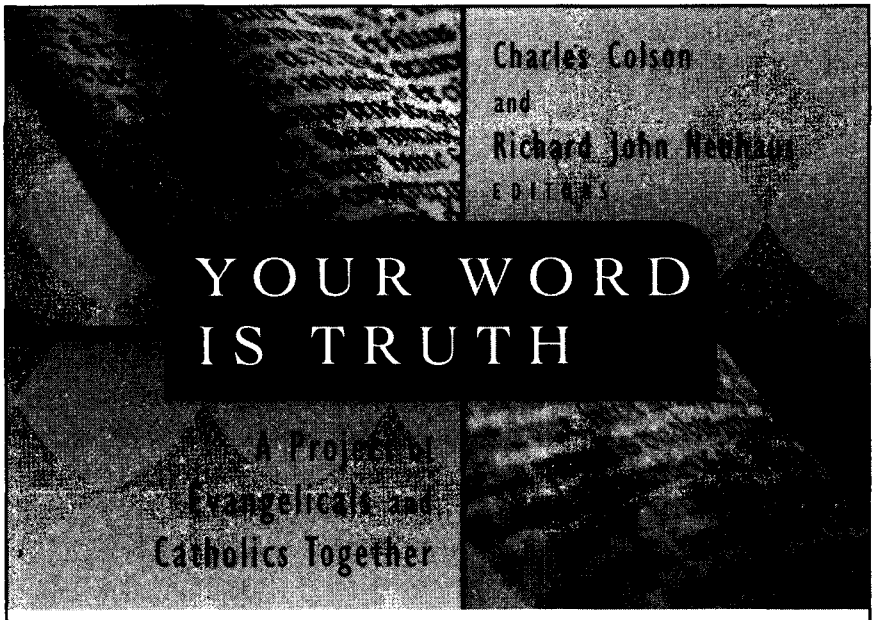
Nelson has clearly uncovered an important, often ignored, dimension of economics as a discipline and profession. He is certainly right to emphasize that, in practice, there is no such thing as a value-free economist. He is also justified in noting that economists often try to apply their methods and assumptions to areas of life far beyond economic phenomena. This approach becomes both offensive and absurd when economists take on issues like marriage, sexuality, or the economics of religion itself. When someone with actual training in moral theology or religious history and doctrine dips into this literature, he is struck by the ghastly incompetence and stunning hegemonic arrogance of the economist who believes that a simple postulate, like the universal call of material self-interest, can provide ultimate explanatory power.

Nelson's analysis is particularly satisfying when describing the economist's faith in the tools of state power. When one considers the record of central planning by government authority, one finds much to regard as failure. Despite the faith of the Progressives, New Dealers, and Great Society social planners, the state has not tamed the business cycle, equalized the distribution of wealth, raised up the poor, provided equal opportunity for all, saved the environment, or stemmed financial crises.

Most improvements in material well-being in society stem from market actors and the natural development and extension of entrepreneurship in a market setting. They are not the automatic result of laws, legislation, regulation, and market manipulation. Why, then, are so many economists still so convinced of the merit of state power as a tool of social and economic improvement?

One can certainly explain such behavior as an indication that economics is a religion and thus resistant to internal questioning. The trouble for Nelson's thesis is that it's no less sensible to chalk it up to the kind of error to which all modern academic disciplines are prone. Like history, sociology, and political science, economics is slow to learn, slow to change, and slow to adapt to new realities.

Nelson thus goes much too far in his insistence that the extended (and overextended) metaphor of "economics as religion" can capture the essence of how economists think. Is it really true that when an economist asserts that "unemployment is bad," this is evidence of a doctrine rooted



On the long list of traditional disagreements between evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics is the relationship between Scripture and tradition. It is commonly felt that there can be no way of getting over or around the fundamental difference between the Protestant principle of "Scripture alone" and the Catholic reliance on both Scripture and authoritative tradition.

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CONTRIBUTORS: **Charles Colson, Avery Cardinal Dulles, Timothy George, Thomas G. Guarino, Francis Martin, Richard John Neuhaus, J. I. Packer, and John Woodbridge.**

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Trinity International University announces its search for the position of Dean of its law school in Santa Ana, California. The university seeks nominations and applications for the Law School Dean's position to begin with the 2002-2003 academic year.

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in religious faith? Likewise, if he claims that "people ought to be prosperous," is his statement really dependent on a hidden metaphysical claim?

Nelson is able to employ his metaphor for 350 pages because he appears to have less respect for religion as a discipline than he ought to. In Nelson's view, "religion" has little to do with God; it isn't even a spiritually centered endeavor, much less a rigorous and systematic belief system concerning the relationship between time and eternity. Instead, it is merely a value-forming process. It is frustrating to agree with so many of the author's insights, particularly with regard to issues of wealth distribution and environmentalism, while having to look past his primary argument.

None of this is to say that I do not sympathize with Nelson's attempt to emphasize the moral foundations of the market economy and economic thinking. However, these valid and valuable points could have been made without, in effect, discounting and diluting genuine religion, not to mention making an overly broad, and ultimately unconvincing, criticism of the discipline of economics.

What Christianity Did to Philosophy

What Is Ancient Philosophy? By Pierre Hadot. Translated by Michael Chase. *Harvard University Press. 362 pp. $29.95.*

***Reviewed by* Benjamin Balint**

According to Pierre Hadot, a prominent historian of ancient thought and professor emeritus at the Collège de France, philosophy today—specialized, professional, and detached from life—is but a shadow of its glorious Athenian past. But that is not the original part of his thesis. A wide array of modern minds have thought the same: Hegel lamented that philosophy is no longer "practiced as a private art, as it was by the Greeks," Heidegger called for a return to the Greek grammar of being, and Kant claimed that "the ancient Greek philosophers remained more faithful to the Idea of the philosopher than their modern counterparts have done." What *is* new in *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* is that its author confidently identifies Christianity as the agent of philosophy's decline.

In his latest book, first published in France in 1995, Hadot surveys with care the great schools of classical thought—Platonism, Aristotelianism, Cynicism, Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Skepticism—and argues that they share not only a drive to offer rational explanations of the world but also a conception of philosophy profoundly different from the way that discipline currently understands itself. As in his last book, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Hadot shows that unlike today, philosophers in the age of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum *practiced* their craft; they did not merely study it. Since they considered philosophy a means of inner transformation rather than a purely theoretical endeavor, the ancients aimed not at resolving abstract problems or thinking systematically but at preparing themselves for truth and making themselves susceptible to it by cultivating certain attitudes of mind: equanimity and absence of worry (*ataraxia*), independence (*autarkeia*), good disposition (*euthumia*), and so forth. These inner calibrations in turn demanded a highly developed philosophical exercise (*askesis*) of self-awareness, self-mastery, and examination of the conscience. Philosophy required rational living as much as rational thinking.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the philosophers of antiquity, from the Presocratics to the late Neoplatonists, flourished in tight communities of shared dialogue and practice. The Stoic sage Seneca counseled that "the living word and life in common will benefit you more than written discourse," and his contemporaries indeed tended to think togeth-

Benjamin Balint *is Assistant Editor of* Commentary.

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er and to think out loud. "For Aristotle," as for others, Hadot says, "the discussion of problems was ultimately more formative than their solution." Membership in a philosophical school entailed not doctrinal allegiance but, as Hadot puts it, "the choice of a certain way of life and existential option which demands from the individual a total change of lifestyle, a conversion of one's entire being, and ultimately a certain desire to be and to live in a certain way."

If this strikes you as closer to religion than philosophy, then you are thinking like an early Christian. For far from rejecting pagan philosophy, Hadot notes, Christianity borrowed from it extensively, ultimately deriving its very conception of itself from Greek thought. The fledgling religion presented itself not only as *a* philosophy, in the ancient sense of the term, but as *the* philosophy. If doing philosophy meant living in conformity with reason (the thinking went), if it really represented "a conversion of one's entire being," then Christians were philosophers and (at least some) philosophers Christians. Hence we find the apologist Justin, for example, declaring—scarcely a century after Jesus—that "those who, before Christ, led a life accompanied by reason are Christians, even if they were known as atheists. Such were Socrates, Heraclitus, and those like them." (For a wider discussion of Justin's view, see "The Christianity of Philosophy" in the May 2001 First Things, where Peter Simpson concludes that "the Christian faith for [Justin] was the true and complete philosophy.")

Hadot further argues that the first Christians annexed from philosophy not only large swaths of the ancient ideological landscape, but also many of its spiritual practices. In the early Christian exercises aiming to instill virtues such as peace of mind and absence of the passions, and in the tradition of contemplative monasticism as developed by such fourth-century Church fathers as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzen, Hadot detects a strong whiff of Greek philosophical practice. Hadot admits that these exercises "formed part of a broader ensemble of practices which were specifically Christian." Still, though "the Christian philosophers tried to Christianize their use of secular philosophical themes," they could not help "describing their spiritual exercises by means of the vocabulary and concepts of secular philosophy."

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But the heart of Hadot's argument lies in his contention that in the process of digesting it, Christianity slowly but inexorably broke philosophy apart. The ancient schools that had not disappeared (Platonism and Aristotelianism in particular), removed from the ways of life that inspired them, "were reduced to the status of mere conceptual material which could be used in theological controversies." Philosophy, made to serve theology, became merely theoretical. "Aristotelian logic and ontology," for example, "furnished concepts that were indispensable for the formulation of the dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation." But Christianity, itself a pervasive way of life, had little use for the practical elements of ancient philosophy (other than those it chose to appropriate). So when philosophy emerged many centuries later into its own again to breathe the air of the Enlightenment, it "consider[ed] itself a theoretical science, because the existential dimension of philosophy no longer had any meaning from the perspective of Christianity." And so it was, Hadot concludes, that philosophy, stripped to its conceptual content, became the impoverished thing it is today.

The problem with this story is not its moral. As morals go, Hadot's is uplifting and deserves to be heard. The lesson, he says, is simply that "there is no discourse which deserves to be called philosophical if it is separated from the philosophical life, and there is no philosophical life unless it is directly linked to philosophical discourse."

The trouble lies rather with the story itself. To begin with, as mentioned above, nostalgia for the original union of *praxis* and *theoria* propels some of the most powerful currents of modern philosophy; it may even be said to be a kind of shibboleth of fashionably self-critical moderns. Alexander Nehamas, in *The Art of Living*, showed that the Socratic attention to the ways philosophy shapes personality deeply informed the views of Montaigne, Nietzsche, and Foucault—and Hadot himself, citing Descartes, awkwardly admits that the old ideal of *philosophia* never really died (had it vanished entirely, we would not find Hadot's own book so unstartling). He might have added that the insistence that thought not abstract itself from life would also form a crucial theme for both the existentialists and the pragmatists.

Further, Hadot's account—which might more aptly have borne the title *Where Did Modern Philosophy Come From?*—in considering ancient philosophies as ways of life, too often obscures their substance. What about

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the *content* of ancient contemplation sets it apart from modern philosophical reflection? Is there nothing about the subject matter of classical speculation that distinguishes it from the study of philosophy today? On this Hadot utters not a word.

But his narrative wobbles most of all in the description of Christianity's link to ancient philosophy, a relationship that is both closer and more remote than the author allows. More remote because in his account of the assimilation of philosophy into the early Church, Hadot fails fully to acknowledge the distinctively revealed character of Christianity or indeed the ways in which faith colors the Christian conception of truth. "Faith," Kierkegaard reminds us, "is not a knowledge." Surely there is a great leap from truth rationally discovered to truth divinely revealed and from the imperative to doubt to the command to believe, but this is a gap Hadot is not keen to describe.

On the other hand, these two great forces are closer than Hadot permits precisely because the ideal of transformative knowledge defines religion in a way no other quality does. For this very reason, some claim that ancient thought is precociously religious more than Christianity is belatedly philosophical. But we needn't go that far to recognize that the inseparability of speculative discourse and concrete conduct is a fundamentally religious notion. Philosophy may have embroidered the idea, but religion had always announced that the truth that fails to transform its bearer is no truth at all. (This is true also in Judaism. In his commentary on the Torah, the rabbinic scholar Samson Raphael Hirsch writes: "All 'religion,' all so-called 'honoring God in spirit,' is worthless if the thought, the idea of God, is not strong enough to exercise its power practically in the control of our words and doings.")

Seen in this light, the Christian stewardship of philosophy, far from dissolving it, may actually have *preserved* the union of thought and deed. The real question would then be: Why did our modern philosophers, those "artists of reason," when freed from their religious guardians to sculpt an intellectual world afresh, choose to reject the potent synthesis that marked Greece and Christendom alike? But that would be another, more judicious book.

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AFTER AQUINAS: VERSIONS OF THOMISM. By FERGUS KERR. *Blackwell. 254 pp. $24.95 paper.*

"The problem with Thomism," Flannery O'Connor once wrote, "is that it comes in such horrible wrappers." Today's students—if they read Thomas Aquinas at all—are likely to know only that he said something about how to prove God's existence (that modern physics has shown to be false), virtue ethics (that was just a rehash of Aristotle), and natural law (that prefigured in some way our contemporary idea of human rights). The Angelic Doctor, in other words, could use a bit of repackaging. Fergus Kerr, a Dominican and Regent of Studies of Blackfriars, Oxford, provides an excellent account of why such misunderstandings of Thomas' thought have arisen and directs us back to Aquinas' own words to show what he actually wrote. The book is unusual in that it serves not only as an introduction to Thomas' thought but also to that most unwieldy of beasts, Thomistic scholarship. Kerr has organized the book into a series of chapters that focus on such issues as Thomas' life and times, epistemology, natural theology, natural law, ethics, grace, deification, and the place of God and Christ in Thomas' masterpiece, the *Summa Theologiae.* Throughout, Kerr argues against the misunderstanding brought about by the Leonine Thomists, who after Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* were more interested in seeing Thomas as a foil to modern philosophy than as a theologian whose *Summa Theologiae* was, as Kerr writes, paraphrasing Anna Williams, "concerned to spell out the conditions for participation by graced human beings in the life of the

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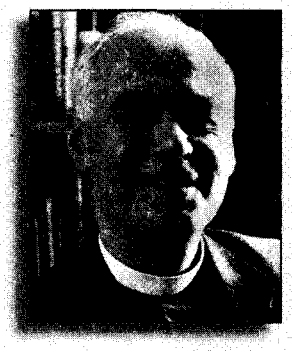

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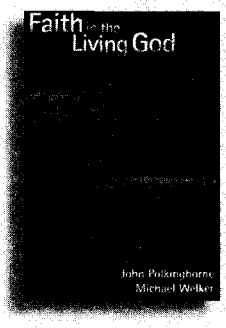

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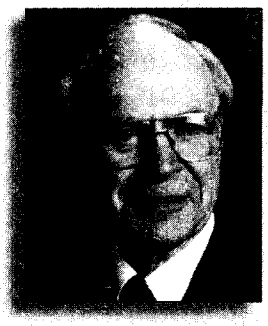

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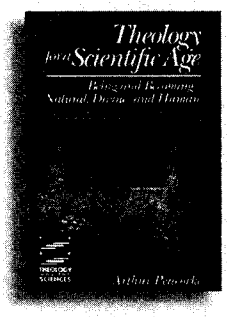

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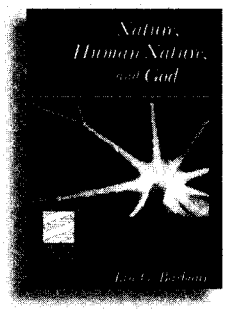

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blessed Trinity." Kerr's account is marked by an intense focus on Thomas' text and on his life as a friar in the new order founded by Dominic. Thomas' thought must be understood, Kerr insists, within the biblical and patristic tradition on which Thomas drew so intensely and in light of the Arabized neoplatonism that exercised such a strong influence on the theology faculty of the University of Paris. Kerr's analysis presents fresh insight into Aquinas' thought and the scholarship that has grown up around it, from Cajetan and Suarez to John Milbank and Eugene Rogers. It will be a valuable resource for all those new to Thomas as well as for those interested in exploring his thought in greater depth. O'Connor would be pleased.

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ANCIENT AND POSTMODERN CHRISTIANITY: PALEO-ORTHODOXY IN THE 21ST CENTURY. Edited by KENNETH TANNER and CHRISTOPHER HALL. *InterVarsity. 280 pp. $25 paper.*

Essays by J. I. Packer, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Carl Braaten, Thomas Howard, Richard John Neuhaus, and fourteen others, published in honor of the life and work of Thomas Oden. The essays range across a wide variety of theological, moral, and historical subjects, yet each has a connection with the great contribution of the book's honoree. Oden, a Methodist, started out in the sixties as the very model of the where-it's-happening-now liberal theologian, and then was sharply turned around through the influence of the remarkable Jewish thinker Will Herberg, who persuaded him that his personal opinionating was of little interest if not grounded in the classic sources. Oden has gone on to be a pioneer in retrieving the patristic tradition for evangelical Protestants, and in leading a very effective confessional movement in the liberal oldline churches. He is also a prime mover in the enterprise known as Evangelicals and Catholics Together. It is Oden's dearest hope that his theology will be found to contain nothing new, since all that is most excitingly new is to be found in the old.

THE SKEPTIC: A LIFE OF H. L. MENCKEN. By TERRY TEACHOUT. *HarperCollins. 432 pp. $29.95.*

Few American journalists have so bestrided that line of work as H. L. Mencken of Baltimore (1880-1956). His capacity to be outraged and

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amused by the world's doings, and the flood of his written reactions, usually in derision and caricature, were apparently inexhaustible. Mr. Teachout's searching and sometimes painfully candid biography probes the conflicted sources of Mencken's energies in his bargain-basement Nietzschean atheism, his robust sense of superiority in a universe ruled by Social Darwinism, and his uncritical nineteenth-century faith in Progress. About the last he was not at all the skeptic. Mencken lived to write, and along the way he practically invented the newspaper column, made the American language a subject of serious study, and indelibly imprinted upon the popular mind his interpretation of some of the great events of his time, notably the Scopes "monkey trial" in Tennessee. He could be frankly reactionary, as in his opposition to U.S. participation in the world wars and his vitriolic attacks on FDR. Teachout carefully examines the evidence that Mencken was an anti-Semite, and concludes that he was, although it must be said that he was equally vicious in his remarks about other groups. Prejudices were the meat and potatoes of Mencken's life and work. Toward the end of his life, he quoted the words of Elizabeth in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, "I hope I never ridicule what is wise or good." Mencken wrote: "I believe I might say the same thing, and put it in the past tense. . . . My sneers and abjurations have been reserved exclusively for braggarts and mountebanks, quacks and swindlers, fools and knaves." It is a brag that does not stand the test of—to cite but a most notable instance—his vicious smearing of William Jennings Bryan, and evangelical Protestants more generally, in his classic account, written in white hot venom, of the Scopes trial. Mencken was, among other things, a master of what today might be called hate literature, albeit hate literature of a high literary order. But then there were the other things: his capacity for friendship, his frequent generosity to colleagues, his gentleness with a sickly wife, his insatiable fascination with the circus that is American life, and, above all, his command of the possibilities of the written word—possibilities not always employed to debunk and deride. Terry Teachout brings narrative power, judicious judgment, and an eye for little but telling things to the story of a huge figure who has left a lasting mark on the way Americans think about themselves, and who is still read, and worth reading, today.

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THE DEAD SEA CONSPIRACY: TEILHARD DE CHARDIN AND THE NEW AMERICAN CHURCH. By JAMES K. FITZPATRICK. *WinePress. 250 pp. $12.95 paper.*

James K. Fitzpatrick writes regularly for the *Wanderer* and is not the fellow you would expect to write a novel implying that it does not really matter that much whether Jesus did or did not actually rise from the dead. But then, maybe that is not the point of the story. Maybe the point is that Teilhard thought it would not matter and, if he was convinced Jesus is still buried in Palestine, his Jesuit colleagues would do all in their power to lay the foundations for a New American Church freed from dependence upon the supernatural. Part theological puzzler, part intra-Catholic polemic, part wacky portrait of Irish Catholicism in New York, *The Dead Sea Conspiracy* is an entertainment that manages to amuse and disturb.

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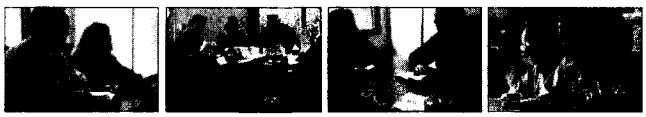

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TRANSNATIONAL CATHOLICISM IN POST-COMMUNIST EUROPE. By TIMOTHY A. BYRNES. *Rowman & Littlefield. 154 pp. $25.95.*

In this informative and thoughtful book, the author, who teaches political science at Colgate University, reports on the state of Catholicism in post-Communist Europe, especially Poland, Slovakia, Romania, and Croatia. He offers a nicely balanced diagnosis of the strengths of Catholicism's "multilayered" constitution, which provides a powerful transnational dimension centered in Rome, but is also grounded in intense national and ethnic identities that hinder the Church's hope to provide a cultural foundation for a united Europe. That hope is opposed by secularism in Western Europe and is undermined by profound anxieties in formerly Communist countries about the possibilities of being European and, at the same time, maintaining their cultural, meaning mainly Catholic, identities.

UNHOLY WAR: TERROR IN THE NAME OF ISLAM. By JOHN L. ESPOSITO. *Oxford University Press. 196 pp. $25.*

Esposito directs the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University and, like most Middle East scholars, has over the years presented a roseate picture of an Islam sorely misunderstood by the West. After September 11, some hur-

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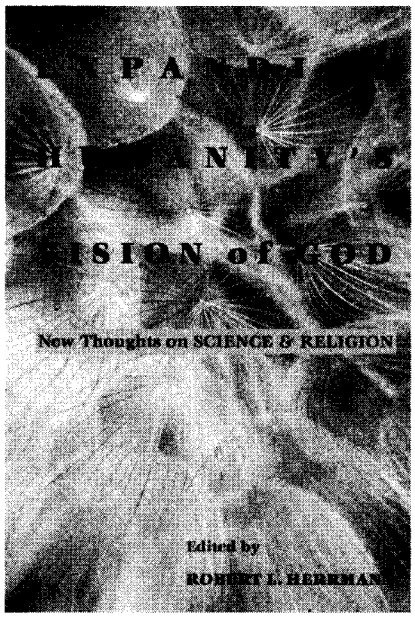

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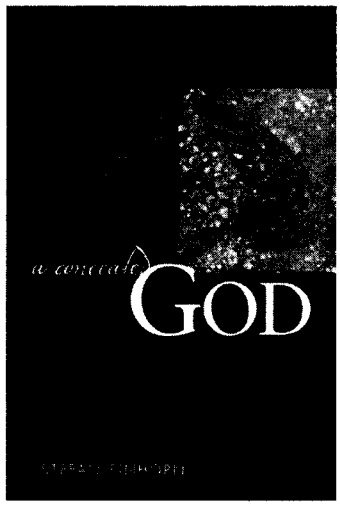

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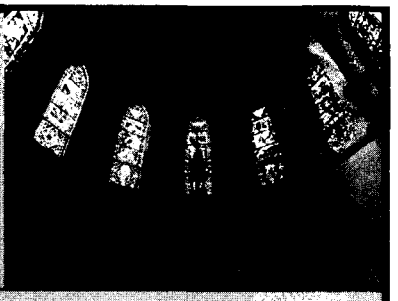
ried academic damage control was required, and this is Esposito's modestly revisionist acknowledgment that there are some nasty dynamics at work within Islam but we should not be excessively distracted by the recent unpleasantness. One wishes it were more convincing.

NUREMBERG: THE RECKONING. By WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR. *Harcourt. 366 pp. $25.*

As in his last novel, *Elvis in the Morning*, Buckley has a boy of German and American parentage returning to postwar Germany, in this case as a soldier-translator at the Nuremberg trials. The brisk pace of the tale is not slowed by astute reflections on what does and does not count as a crime against humanity, and whether those responsible for the Allied bombing of Dresden and Hiroshima should not also be in the dock as war criminals. The narrative hook is the question of what the young man's father was doing during the Hitler years, and for the answer to that one must read *Nuremberg*, an engaging story with substantive moral provocations.



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A PELICAN IN THE WILDERNESS. By ISABEL COLEGATE. *Counterpoint. 284 pp. $25.*

A writer of novels, almost by definition, has to know a good deal about solitude, and Ms. Colegate is a novelist of distinction. In this charming book she offers vignettes, almost always sympathetic, of hermits and contemplatives, Christian and otherwise, who chose to be alone with the Alone. Not all of them were religiously motivated in the usual sense of the term, and she includes, for instance, eccentric English aristocrats who were scopophobes—people averse to being seen by others. It is a strange and fetching book, and readers oppressed by a society of togetherness might well benefit by spending some time with it, almost alone.

IN THE STEPS OF THE MASTER. By H. V. MORTON. *Da Capo. 388 pp. $16 paper.*

An instructive and utterly engaging travelogue of a journey to the Holy Land in the 1930s, with a new introduction by Richard John Neuhaus. In the early 1920s, Morton scooped the world's press on the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb and went on to become one of the most celebrated travel writers of the century. Da Capo Press is to be congratulated for reissuing some of his most popular books,

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of which *A Traveler in Italy*, along with the present volume, is most particularly recommended.

Arius: Heresy and Tradition. By Rowan Williams. *Eerdmans. 378 pp. $24 paper.*

First published in 1987, this study of the fourth-century heresiarch is revised and enhanced by a final section taking up scholarly criticisms of the first edition. Williams, the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, is sympathetic to Arius, who, he says, was a conservative theologian trying to be faithful to the biblical witness while also coming to terms with fundamental philosophical challenges. Williams is not an Arian, but his very Anglican conclusion is that the line between heresy and orthodoxy is not always clear and cannot be settled by church authority.

Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin. By Jeffrey Bruce Beshoner. *University of Notre Dame Press. 360 pp. $39.95.*

The subtitle is "The Search for Orthodox and Catholic Union," and that was the life's work of the indefatigable Gagarin, a nineteenth-century Russian aristocrat who became a Roman Catholic and Jesuit. It is a fascinating story that will be of particular interest to readers who follow current efforts to reestablish the communion that will enable the Church to, in the words of John Paul II, "breathe again with both lungs."

Law, Life, and the Living God. By Scott R. Murray. *Concordia. 250 pp. $32.99 paper.*

A scholarly and lucid study on a subject that has loomed large in Lutheran theology, namely, the "third use" of the law as a guide to Christian living. Among Lutheran theologians, the law is a "curb" against sinful behavior and a "mirror" showing us our sinfulness, but its third use has been much disputed, leading other Christians to charge that Lutheranism is essentially antinomian. The book is an exemplary exercise in confessional theology that is ecumenically engaged.

Your Word Is Truth. Edited by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus. *Eerdmans. 168 pp. $20 paper.*

The conflict between "Scripture alone" and "Scripture and tradition" has been a staple of disagreements between Protestants and Catholics for centuries. *Your Word Is Truth* recasts old arguments, and advances some new ones, in ways that should substantively change familiar conversations. The book includes the joint statement of the project known as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," and includes invaluable supporting essays by Avery Cardinal Dulles, Timothy George, Thomas Guarino, Francis Martin, J. I. Packer, and John Woodbridge, along with an essay by the editors providing important background on the ECT project and its proposed future.

Militant Islam Reaches America. By Daniel Pipes. *Norton. 296 pp. $25.95.*

To say this book is sobering is an understatement. Pipes has been studying Islam for more than three decades. He understands why people want to talk about "root causes" of terrorism and speak wistfully about Islam as a "religion of peace," but he is rightly intolerant of those who refuse to face up to the very real threat of radical Islamism. An important tract for the times.

Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism. By Randall Balmer. *Westminster/John Knox. 664 pp. $29.95.*

How do you define an evangelical? Who are the major figures, what are the formative disputes and agreements, and what are the significant institutions that make up the maddeningly diverse religious empire of evangelicaldom? No one book can come even close to providing exhaustive answers, but Columbia University's Balmer has rendered an important service by bringing so much between the covers of this handy reference.

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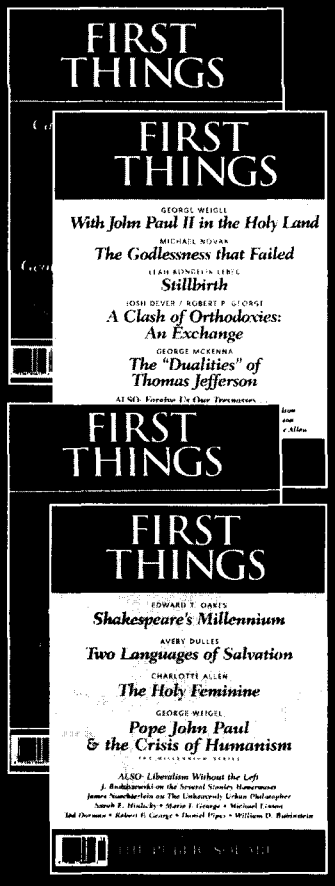

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

The Embarrassment of Sin and Grace

It is hard to know precisely where we are in the unfolding of the Long Lent of 2002. Elsewhere in this section, I have a comment on Peter Steinfels' evaluation of media misdoings, and what he thinks about the "reform" agendas that are hitching a ride on the scandals. As of this writing, the whole thing has been off most of the front pages for several months, and some readers say we should be grateful for that and just give the scandals a rest for a while. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I'm inclined to agree. There is little pleasure in writing about these matters. But now there is the official response from Rome to the "charter" and "norms" adopted by the U.S. bishops at Dallas last June. And then there is the November meeting of the bishops in solemn assembly, where I am told the proposal for a plenary council, which I discussed in the last issue, is likely to get short shrift. (*Short shrift*: barely time for confession before dispatching the condemned.)

Back in April, when he met with the U.S. cardinals and some bishops, the Pope said that out of this unspeakable mess must come "a holier episcopate, a holier priesthood, a holier Church." Has that happened? Eight months is a short time, and holiness is usually a slow growth. One gets the impression that there is, all in all, a humbler episcopate, along with a priesthood of greater sobriety, mixed with disillusionment and a measure of anger. As for the faithful who are the Church, they continue to be faithful, more or less. In October I spoke to a large group of Catholics and mentioned in passing "the recent scandals." There were quizzical looks on a number of faces, and it apparently took a few seconds to make the connection. So ephemeral are the media storms that only a few months earlier created the sense of foundation-shaking crisis. One might at times almost think that we had, as they say, put it all behind us. That is, although not devoid of attractions, a delusion. I expect we will be sorting out the long-term consequences of the Long Lent of 2002 for a long time to come.

Priests—guilty and innocent alike—continue to be dismissed, put on "administrative leave," and subjected to public humiliation under the rule of the mantras of "zero tolerance" and "one strike and you're out." Bishops continue to boast of how much they have learned and how tough they now are as they punish others for their own sins in failing to govern their churches. Not all bishops, to be sure, but too many. I am not unaware that there are bishops—and not only bishops—who think I have been too hard on them. One cannot help but sympathize with men who felt themselves to be between a rock and a hard place at Dallas, and that helps to explain the panicked reaction in approving practices about which many had profound misgivings. But a panicked reaction it was. I also confess to a certain uneasiness that some bishops who have welcomed my critique of Dallas do not themselves have a conspicuous record of upholding what the Pope called "total commitment" to the Church's teaching on sexual morality. There is probably not much to be done about the ways in which this analysis of Dallas and its consequences can be used and misused.

Some bishops—perhaps most—have not, but others have broken understandings of strictest confidentiality and publicly released the names of priests, even of those who are now dead but against whom accusations were once made. Not proved, not investigated and found probable—just made. By somebody, often unnamed. The public has a right to know, don't you

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know. And there are bishops who have a need to preen in their newly discovered virtue of "transparency." The priests, being dead, raise no objections. Their families were so proud of them, their parishioners so loved them. Now, by courtesy of their bishop, they learn from the newspapers that their pride and their love were misplaced.

Here in New York and across the country, priests who still have the good fortune of being alive are raising objections. Some who are organizing and protesting have a long track record of fighting authority, and will use any occasion to take bishops down a notch or two. But most of them are faithful and orthodox priests who sense that something fundamental is happening—in the relationship between priests and bishops, and maybe in the self-understanding of the Church. They are being forced to wonder what was meant by all that solemn language when they were ordained. For instance, "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek." Then they folded their hands in the hands of the bishop and swore to obey him. And the bishop swore that he would be a father to them, and support them in their ministries through every trial. Or did he? Now, it seems, there were hidden clauses. "Except if you become a public embarrassment to me." "Except if the media heat makes it expedient for me to repudiate you." It is expedient that one man, or a dozen, should be sacrificed for the public image of the episcopal office (see John 11:50).

One hears frequent reference to the bishop who, in order to avoid a financial settlement, disclaimed responsibility for his priests, asserting that they are "independent contractors." From being "another Christ" (*alter Christus*) to being an independent contractor is quite a fall. At ordination the language is redolent of the covenantal; now it is riddled with the contractual. A contract is, when all is said and done, just a deal. And to many priests it looks less and less like a good deal. Do not misunderstand: I am not talking about priests who by heinous acts have radically deformed the form of the priesthood of Christ. Nor about priests who pose a credible threat to children and therefore, as the Pope said in April, have no place whatsoever in the priesthood. I am talking about priests who, under intense media pressure, become an embarrassment, who are deemed personally expendable when it is institutionally expedient.

The press wanted to know why a bishop in the West did not include a certain name on his list of those to be publicly shamed. The bishop explained that, at the time of the incident, the woman involved with the priest was of age, "So we didn't think it was a problem." It was not a problem that the priest had violated his sacred vows of fidelity to the Church's teaching and of perfect and perpetual continence. What the bishop apparently meant to say is that, according to the rules established by the media, it was not supposed to be an embarrassment. A bishop who is praised by the press for being very "forthcoming" in destroying the reputations of priests—also of priests long dead—has in his diocese theologians who seem to deny what the Church teaches about the divinity of Jesus, agitate for the ordination of women, and openly repudiate doctrines solemnly defined. He has priests who creatively revise the canon of the Mass, others who are known to cruise gay bars, and yet others who have women on the side. None of these, it appears, is a "problem." The media are not after them. Indeed, theological dissenters and "nontraditional" liturgical practices are celebrated by the media. As are "gay-friendly" bishops who extend their tolerance to heterosexuals who cannot live with the supposedly oppressive and antiquated rule of celibacy.

It is not only the relationship between priests and bishops that seems to be changing with unforeseen, but potentially momentous, consequences. Amidst the static of conflicting messages, one picks up signals suggesting a changed understanding of what it means to be the Church. Consider a small instance of possibly large significance. Who would have thought that the *New York Times* would have occasion to take note of Father Maurice Grammond of Portland, Oregon? He may turn out to be a synecdoche of changes worked by these troubled times. We are told that he spent his ministry in "a handful of rural parish assignments, where he is remembered as aloof and cranky." That a priest on the other side of the country was aloof and cranky would hardly seem to warrant a half-page story in the *Times*. No, beginning with lawsuits in 1999, Fr. Grammond was publicly accused of having had a habit of groping boys during a period from the 1950s into the early 1980s. That too, regrettably, would no longer seem to be a national story.

Then, at age eighty-two, Fr. Grammond died. He had been ordained fifty-two years, retired fourteen years, and eleven years ago he was suspended from the priesthood. He died in a home for people with Alzheimer's. Before his dementia and before accusations became public, he made a will asking for a funeral Mass in Portland's Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, where he had said his first Mass, and for burial in the section for priests in Mount Calvary cemetery. He received neither. He was not excommunicate. He participated in the sacraments, and received the Last Rites before he died. He therefore was, as Catholic doctrine would have it, a repentant and forgiven sinner. A funeral Mass for a priest is usually in the cathedral, with the bishop presiding. That is a particular sign of honor, and it is understandable that

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it was denied to one who had so disgraced himself and the priesthood, and had so betrayed those committed to his charge. (I am assuming for present purposes, although I do not know, that he was guilty as charged.)

Fr. Grammond's sister asked that her brother receive a Christian burial from St. Ignatius. "Some of the people Fr. Grammond had abused are still parishioners here," explained the pastor. "I made the call that this would be so harmful to those who are still living. I don't feel great about my response. I'm confused in this whole thing. If any compassion is shown to the priest, does that mean you're insensitive to the victims? In this climate, I think you are." The sister, in disgust, had the body cremated and buried the ashes at the grave of his parents. She did not want vandals to find him, so there is no stone for Fr. Grammond. Forty-one years of priesthood, however marred by sins grave and venial, and there is nothing. Except his name in the newspaper and the observation that he was aloof and cranky. In those rural parishes where he undoubtedly presided at hundreds of baptisms and marriages, where he counseled the anguished and comforted the grieving, where he thousands of times brought heaven to earth in the Real Presence, was there no one to say a good word on behalf of Fr. Grammond? Was there not bishop or priest with the wit to seize the occasion for speaking hard and healing words about sin and grace? No, he is beyond the pale. He is an embarrassment. He is not one of ours. He is a sinner. Furtively, on the side so to speak, we slipped him absolution and mumbled words about angels greeting him on the far side of Jordan. Let the angels have him. To us, he was nothing. Fr. Maurice Grammond? We never knew him.

The pastor is right to feel uneasy about his decision, and there is no doubt about his being confused. What is this sentimental drivel about "compassion" and "sensitivity"? This is not about feelings and public relations. This is about the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is about a sinner forgiven, a lost sheep found, a prodigal returned. It is about the radical dependence of all of us on the mercy of God. At least that is what the Church teaches and the sacraments effect—*ex opere operato*, as it used to be said. That is how it used to be, but then there is, as the pastor says, the present climate. "The present climate made me do it." That, in effect, is what the bishops said at Dallas, and it is no surprise that the excuse is invoked by others. It is for the good of the institution. It may not be right, but it is expedient.

I have been asked more than once, "So what should we have done at Dallas?" Since I have made bold, although I hope with due deference, to criticize what the bishops did do, I suppose I should have a response to that question. I do not have a detailed answer as to what the bishops should or could have done, but I am convinced that they should not have done what they did, which was to submit to a script of staged self-denigration written by the media and public relations experts, from which they emerged as born-again tough guys sworn to expiate their failures of oversight by the peremptory punishment of priests, guilty or innocent, who might embarrass them. Positively, they should have acted as bishops, as men charged, above all, with the responsibility of teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ as it pertains to human sinfulness—including their own sins of omission and commission—the grace of forgiveness, and the call to holiness. In that April meeting, the Pope spoke of fidelity to the Church's teaching, of the call to holiness, and of life-transforming grace. These items were not on the agenda at Dallas, and have not been conspicuous in many episcopal statements since Dallas. The sole concern, it is said again and again, is to protect the children. And to be perceived to be protecting the children.

Of course it is imperative to protect the children. But the necessarily scrupulous attention to that imperative neither justifies nor requires what some bishops are doing. It neither requires nor justifies destroying reputations, also of the defenseless dead. It neither requires nor justifies depriving people, without due process, of what they and the Church declared to be a vocation from God. It neither requires nor justifies denying that Maurice Grammond is our brother in Christ. Few are sinners as notorious as he, but notoriety is not the measure of the fault for which we plead and, by the grace of God, receive forgiveness. When the Church begins to distance herself from sinners, she becomes something less than the Church of Christ. She begins to mirror the self-righteousness of many of her critics. I expect the pastor is right in thinking that some might have been offended by our acknowledging Fr. Grammond as one of our own. But we have no choice in the matter. We cannot disown him, for Christ has claimed him as his own. At least that is what the Church—and, we believe, Christ—said when, through the ministry of another unworthy priest, the words of forgiveness were spoken.

On October 18, Rome officially responded to the work of Dallas. The Holy See did not give the approval (*recognitio*) that the U.S. bishops conference wanted, saying that the "norms" and "charter" of Dallas "contain provisions which in some aspects are difficult to reconcile with the universal law of the Church." The evident concerns in Rome are those that have received extended comment in these pages, including the impossibly elastic definition of sexual abuse adopted

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by Dallas, and the bishops' abdication of leadership by establishing a national review board that raises fundamental questions about the apostolic governance of the Church. Neither Rome nor the U.S. conference has explicitly addressed the disciplining of bishops who are responsible for the scandals that occasioned the current crisis. The conference indirectly addressed that issue by making Governor Frank Keating and his board, in cooperation with the media, the "enforcers" of the Dallas policy. *Episkopos* means overseer, and the question is, Who will oversee the overseers? Traditionally, Rome claims that responsibility, although many believe that in recent years it has not been effectively exercised. The national conference has sometimes vied with Rome for that and other roles, but the grave missteps at Dallas, joined to the scandals that occasioned the crisis in the first place, have dealt a severe setback to the claim that the American bishops are capable of governing themselves.

The oversight of the overseers and other questions will now be addressed by a "mixed commission" of four U.S. bishops and four representatives of the pertinent departments of the Curia (called congregations or dicasteries), which will presumably come up with resolutions in time for the November meeting of the national conference. The response of the Holy See is, I believe, both necessary and hopeful. It should be possible to devise policies that, unlike those of Dallas, are not incompatible with either justice or love. Such policies will not be incompatible with bishops being shepherds who protect the flock from preying wolves, and also fathers to priests whom they hold to the course of fidelity. They will not be incompatible with the saving truth that the Church is a community of forgiven sinners called to be, but typically failing to be, saints. In short, such policies should not be incompatible with bishops daring to depart from the script in order to give clear witness to a gospel that, by worldly standards, is something of an embarrassment. St. Paul called it a scandal. And the greatest scandal is to turn it into something other than that.

FT

PUSHING BACK

"Here we go again. The December war of religion is among our most cherished traditions. Somebody is always angry or hurt over something." That's from a last December column by John Leo, but get ready: here we go again. Last year's campaign for the utterly naked public square was notably virulent. It is no longer over crèches or signs explicitly mentioning Christmas. Under attack now is any display of Santa Claus, Rudolph, Christmas trees, poinsettias, holiday lights, and even the colors red and green—all of which are condemned for being "religious," and the very worst kind of religion, meaning Christian.

Leo again: "The word 'inclusion' comes up all the time as a term used by those who wish to obliterate rather than include. This is certainly so in Plainfield, Ill., where elementary school principal Sandy Niemiera made a startling announcement: because of diversity concerns, students will no longer be allowed to celebrate any holidays at all. So goodbye Valentine's Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving as well as Christmas and Hanukkah, because the school needs to 'respect each individual's uniqueness but also to help us look for and celebrate those things we have in common.' What the students will have in common, of course, is a sterile, tradition-free public environment. And the school-induced sense that religion and ritual are inherently dangerous.

"In plain English, the term 'inclusion' has come to mean 'exclusion.' In New York's Central Park, we have a Christian nativity scene, a Jewish menorah, and a Muslim star and crescent, all privately paid for and displayed on public property. That's inclusion. Banning all signs of religion from schools and public property (neither of which is called for by the Constitution or the Supreme Court) is exclusion posturing as inclusiveness. There's another new wrinkle in inclusiveness ideology. Call it the sensitive person's veto. Last year, the city of Eugene, Ore., barred Christmas trees from public property, then backed down a bit and allowed firefighters to put up a tree on Christmas Eve and Christmas. But the city manager said that if one person objects, the tree must come down. This allows the most sensitive person in town to set policy. Kensington, Md., banned Santa Claus from this year's tree-lighting ceremony because of two complaints.

"The sensitive person's veto was born in the antismoking campaign and spread to other fields. Now it's showing up in the wars over Christmas and Hanukkah. Those who want to keep those traditions alive in the public square had better push back. The sensitive person's veto requires only one vote to topple any norm. And that vote will always be easy to find."

The Right to be Different

Pushing back has nothing to do with "insensitivity" and everything to do with devotion to a free and

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democratic society. Majority rule, with protections for minorities, is not the whole of democracy, but it is at the heart of democracy. Minorities do not have a constitutional right to be protected from public expressions that remind them that they are in the minority. To be different from the majority does not mean one is, as it is commonly put, a second-class citizen. On the contrary, it is precisely as a first-class citizen that one has a right to be different. What one does not have the right to do is to force others to deny that there is a difference between the majority and the minority.

A complicating factor, of course, is that the most assertive minority when it comes to opposing the public celebration of Christmas is, more often than not, Jewish. Christians are, with very good reason, painfully sensitive on this score. The late Jakob J. Petuchowski of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati wrote wisely about "A Rabbi's Christmas" (FT, December 1991). He was nothing if not Jewish, and he relished the carols, festivities, and pageantry of Christmas. He never missed watching on television the papal Midnight Mass from Rome. "Still all of that is a matter of mere externals," he wrote. "What really intrigues [me] is the fact that millions of [my] non-Jewish fellow human beings are celebrating the birthday of a *Jewish* child. And they are doing so by extolling the values of peace and good will. All the more misplaced . . . are the efforts by some supposedly Jewish organizations to arouse, through their battles against Christmas symbols in public places, the ill will and resentment of Christians—at the very time when the Christian religion, more than at other times of the year, inspires its followers with irenic and philanthropic sentiments."

Rabbi Petuchowski notes that it is the Orthodox Jews from Eastern Europe who may have the most bitter memories of living in a "Christian society." But they are not the ones leading the charge against the public observance of Christmas. "In other words, what we are really dealing with in this annual battle against public Christian observance is not so much a 'Jewish' attack on that observance as it is a *secularist* one—with some of the prominent secularists identifying themselves as Jews. They are the same people who fight *nondenominational* prayers in public schools, the use of public school facilities for meetings of high school religious-interest groups, and state support of private schools. They fight with equal vigor the attempts by other Jewish groups to have Jewish religious symbols exhibited alongside the Christian ones, such as the efforts of the Chabad (Lubavitch) group of Orthodox Jews to place a Hanukkah candelabrum on the public square when a Christmas tree is put there, which would be a fitting demonstration of America's religious pluralism. They are, in other words, not singling out Christianity. They are against the public manifestation of religion per se—even (or perhaps particularly) against the public manifestation of the religion of their own ancestors."

The naked public square, Petuchowski observed, is not good for Jews or anyone else. Jews should recognize in the Christian observance of Christmas "one of the factors that help maintain the religious character of our society—in which Jews, too, with their own beliefs and practices, and with their very lives, have a considerable stake." He concludes: "That is why this writer will continue to wish his Christian friends a 'Merry Christmas' at Yuletide, and rejoice in the fact that those friends join the angelic choir in proclaiming glory to God in the highest, and peace among humankind on earth. He will most certainly not object at all to the public display of his friends' symbols of religious faith. Indeed, he will continue to be moved by awe and wonder that, through the influence of one of his own remote cousins, some of the words of Judaism's Torah have spread to the far corners of the earth."

It is objected that the distinction between "them" and "us" is a threat to social cohesion. The distinction between Jews and Christians is but one of many important distinctions. Among Americans there are, in fact, many distinctions, that are differences of greater or lesser degree, between "us" and "them"—economic, racial, educational, political, cultural, religious. Such distinctions and differences are cross-cutting, sometimes putting one with "us" and sometimes with "them." For the umpteenth time it needs to be said that it is a pseudo-pluralism that requires us to pretend that significant differences make no difference. Genuine pluralism is living with our differences, especially our deepest differences, within the bond of civility. When *e pluribus unum* is misconstrued to deny the *pluribus*, it is the end of pluralism. Both those in the minority and those in the majority should push back against those who would impose a naked public square. Push back, not because it is your right (although it is that, too) but because it is your democratic duty. The denial of cultural expression, which almost inevitably includes religious expression, in public is the death of democracy. That is true for Central Park, the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, Salt Lake City, Louisville, or anywhere else in the—if I may borrow a phrase—gorgeous mosaic that is America. Do your democratic duty. Push back.

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WHAT SHOULD PIUS XII HAVE DONE?

"During the discussion about the possible beatification/canonization of Pope Pius XII the major critique of Pius has been his failure to speak out against the Nazi Holocaust with sufficient specificity. He did issue brief generic condemnations, but no specific condemnations. An example of a generic condemnation would be: one cannot deprive persons or peoples of property and life because of race and religion. A specific condemnation might read: we condemn the Nazi mass gassing of Jews at Auschwitz."

That's the opening paragraph of an article that throws new light, as unlikely as that may seem, on the dispute over Pius XII and the Holocaust. The article is by Father Kilian McDonnell and was published in Rome in the journal *Gregorianum* (vol. 83, no. 2, 2002). The rule that a pope should only issue "generic condemnations," stating the moral principles and leaving specific application to others, goes back way before Pius XII. McDonnell details instances such as the Turkish atrocities against Armenians, the Italian aggression against Abyssinia, and offers particularly interesting insights into the way the Vatican, contrary to the conventional witness, was assiduously neutral between Franco and the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. All the instances are heartbreaking, especially Pius XII's restraint as the Nazis were brutally crushing the Church in Poland.

Pius could be bold, as in 1939 when he had been pope only a few months and against the adamant counsel of all his advisors, he risked Vatican neutrality by alerting the British to the plan of the German generals to overthrow Hitler. In that case and a few others when the Holy See bent its rule of limiting itself to generic condemnations, the reason was always that the pope hoped to play a part in brokering a peace between nations. As McDonnell also notes, in some instances, including that of Jews during the Nazi era, Vatican reticence was supported by some of the victim groups who feared that more specific condemnations would provoke even greater horrors.

Prophecy and Communion

McDonnell's purpose is not to "excuse" what Pius XII did or did not do, but to try to understand. He writes: "Pius XII was fully convinced that, given the actual conditions of the war, he had denounced all of the Nazi war crimes in these generic condemnations, while at the same time remaining technically neutral. Precisely because he was neutral and condemned in generic terms what was worthy of reprobation, applicable to both sides, he did not expose Catholics and Jews under German dominion to danger. He thus left open the possibility of providing a climate in which either side might approach him to act as a mediator, thus bringing the war to an end.

"Prophecy is a function of the Church, and it should be manifest in all its members, including the pope. But not in the same way in all. The papal Petrine ministry embraces both charismatic/prophetic and institutional roles.

"As the successor of Peter, Pius XII had the special function of maintaining the unity of the Church, keeping the Church together. His role in the prophetic function was to see that there was a climate in the Church for exercising charismatic freedom and challenge, welcoming and encouraging prophetic protest. Pius XII did welcome prophetic protest in encouraging local bishops in Germany to speak out. He preferred the prophetic advice of Bishop Conrad von Presying to that of the Nuncio to Germany, Cesare Orsenigo, because the latter was too accommodating to the Nazis. Given his concern in a period of great danger to protect both Catholic worship and the Jewish population, Pius in his public acts inclined more to prudence than to prophecy. But if he might end the war (apprising England of the German general's plot), he acted boldly and prophetically.

"If it is true that the place of a true prophet during these years was on the road to Auschwitz, did that prophet have the right to utter a specific public condemnation of specific atrocities, thus causing Catholics and Jews, who looked to him for help, to walk before him into the gas chambers? Some would say, 'yes,' the pope, by reason of his office, should be prophetic also in this case, whoever's blood is spilled.

"The restriction to generic condemnations is apparently still a papal policy. Pope John Paul II admonished Archbishop Oscar Romero with regard to the brutalities in El Salvador to have 'courage and boldness,' but cautioned him to maintain unity with the bishops, and not to condemn specific atrocities, lest he be mistaken in details. Rather he should announce general principles. In a word, balance prophecy with prudence. Romero was not in total accord with this policy."

Returning to World War II, McDonnell says it is hard not to envy the freedom of religious leaders such as William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Willem Visser't Hooft, who would later head the World Council of Churches, to speak out forcefully and in very specific terms. "But," he observes, "neither Temple nor Visser't Hooft had the kind of direct international jurisdiction over local churches which

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the Pope possessed, with all the risk entailed." What we do know beyond doubt, because they said so again and again, is that Hitler and his regime had no doubt that the Pope's "generic" statements applied very specifically to them. The public statements of Pius XII reflect the ambiguous burden that comes with being an institution that is Catholic, as in "universal." What should, what could, the papacy have done in response to the victimization of the Armenians, the Abyssinians, the Catholics of Spain, the Poles, the Jews? Presumably Pius and his predecessors now know and, God willing, we will one day know. No doubt they intended to do the right thing, and we should be more than open to the possibility that they did it. Fr. McDonnell helps us to think about these questions within the larger historical context of the papacy's self-understanding as universal pastor, moral teacher, and peacemaker among the nations.

FT

THE SOUL OF STEVEN PINKER

It is not entirely a straw man that he is attacking. For a long time now, especially among educators, there has, in fact, been an influential school of thought at war with the very idea of human nature. Everything is determined by nurture, environment, and social conditioning, they say. Then there is the reaction launched by Edward O. Wilson with his 1975 book *Sociobiology*, arguing along with such as Richard Dawkins, author of *The Selfish Gene*, that nature is trump. Pushed out of the argument because it is so impossibly incorrect is *The Bell Curve* by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, which argued that IQ and other factors crucial to social success are genetically determined and are unequally distributed among racial groups. But the opponents of natural determinism lump Wilson, Dawkins, and Herrnstein and Murray together as the enemies of equality and the commitment to make the world a much better place by the achievement of social justice.

Now comes along Steven Pinker, a psychologist of language at M.I.T., with a new book, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (Viking). Pinker is telegenic and articulate—some say facile—and *Maclean's*, the magazine of Canadian identity, describes him as "endearingly Canadian; polite, soft-spoken, attentive to what others say." Pinker, who comes down on the side of Wilson and Co., says, quite rightly, that proponents of the blank slate approach are sometimes prone to implicitly totalitarian plans of social engineering aimed at imposing equality. Equality, he says, is a moral and political idea, not a scientific reality, and again he is right about that. Human beings, and especially human minds, are not equal; they come with innate, genetically formed abilities and behavioral tendencies. The conclusion drawn by Professor Pinker is that a child's life is shaped by natural endowments (genes), family experience, peer groups, and chance happenings. That seems a rather modest payoff for so much ratiocination and scientific huffing and puffing.

What all the major parties to this academic contest have in common is that they are thoroughgoing materialists. Prof. Pinker, for instance, may be "polite, soft-spoken, and attentive to what others say," except when it comes to others—from Plato to Aquinas and from Kierkegaard to Polanyi—who think that human beings are more than matter. The suggestion of anything beyond the reach of his neuroscience—the soul, for instance—is derisively dismissed as the myth of "the Ghost in the machine," a myth abandoned by all but "the religious right." It is, in fact, such dogmatic and vulgar materialism that requires a blind leap of faith. Both the blank slatists and the nature determinists typically assume that those unwilling to make that leap are beyond the pale of rational discourse.

A Different Fundamentalism

Of course, they do not really believe that their ideas are exhaustively explained either by neurological synapses or by environmental conditioning. They write books, give lectures, and appear on talk shows contending that they really do have ideas that are, well, true—just as though there is reason, or soul, or even a ghost in the machine. When asked why we should take their ideas seriously if they are no more than the predetermined products of genes or conditioning, they are inclined to respond, "It is an interesting paradox, isn't it?" No, it isn't. It is simply the incoherent nonsense that follows from a fundamentalist leap of faith into dogmatic materialism.

This does not mean there is nothing to learn from reading books such as *The Blank Slate*. There is much that is useful to know about both natural endowments and environmental influences. We are, after all, embodied souls or, as some prefer, ensouled bodies, and are created for society. We may be instructed by a skilled anatomist who dissects the sexual organs or the brain, while politely declining to believe him when he asserts that that is all there is to sex or to thinking. Likewise, we may be grateful for insights into environmental influences without believing that they

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adequately explain our lives as we know our lives by living.

To understand ourselves as creatures rather than products, as persons possessed of reason and related to the infinite, simply makes more sense of more things that we cannot help but know are true. Among the problems with materialist fundamentalism, apart from its implausibility, is that it is so very boring. That being said, prepare to see Steven Pinker on a forthcoming talk show, responding when challenged (if he is challenged) with, "It is an interesting paradox, isn't it?" At which point you may say to the screen, ever so politely, "No, Prof. Pinker. It is neither interesting nor a paradox." You might want to follow that with a prayer for the soul that his belief system prevents him from recognizing that he has.

FT

"SORRY, JESUS . . . "

A first among ELCA Lutherans is the action of the Delaware-Maryland Synod to rescind its membership in Reconciled in Christ and sever all affiliation with Lutherans Concerned, two gay advocacy organizations pushing the ELCA—with apparent effectiveness—to ordain active homosexuals and bless same-sex unions. The bishop emeritus of the synod, George P. Mocko, led off the debate. "There will be schism, and it will be large. Legal documents are in process, if not completed, by more than one group. The schism will be so large as to leave the ELCA crippled financially and administratively, occupied with budget and staff cuts. Ecumenically, we will have abandoned our position between the Roman and Orthodox churches on one side and Protestantism on the other, to take a great leap to the left, to join the United Church of Christ (UCC) in ordaining and blessing active homosexuals. I had hoped we could teach the UCC about biblical theology. Instead we will have learned from them how to brush Scripture aside when it gets in the way of an agenda. Learn that skill, and what is next?

"This question gets us into profound matters of faith. If those proposals are adopted, we will be removing what has been the cornerstone of our theology on sexuality for our entire history. That cornerstone has been the words of Jesus, 'Have you not read, that He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? What therefore God has joined together, let no one put asunder.' That has always summarized God's intent in creating us as sexual beings—creating us for monogamous, heterosexual, lifelong relationships of commitment and love, and anything other than that is less than that, and part of a fallen creation.

"That cornerstone would be removed, and erected in its place would be a cornerstone that would now read, 'God has made a variety of sexualities, all to be equally affirmed and celebrated.' There is no biblical basis for such a theology. None. There is no way that anyone can read the books of our Scripture and conclude, 'That is what is here taught.' Efforts to make Scriptures say that have been going on for over a decade. There is no biblical basis for such a view. If Jesus is our Lord, his words must remain central. We cannot say to him, 'Sorry, Jesus, but we find your words narrow and embarrassing. We must lay them aside. We have become much more enlightened in this blessed age of ours. So your words must pass away. We can no longer use them; they do not fit our new understandings. You must excuse me now, I have much work to do rewriting Sunday school material so that our children are sure to be as enlightened as we are.' We cannot do that."

If the gay agenda is successful, Mocko said, "it will mean the effective end of the ELCA, because it means that we will have exchanged our loyalty to our Lord and his words for another. Such a church would lose the loyalty of thousands, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of its people." The ELCA is conducting a million dollar study on homosexuality in church doctrine and practice, and the governing assembly will be asked to make decisions in 2003.

FT

ON MODERNITY AND TRAIN WRECKS

Our Jody Bottum—I say "our" because I've never quite accepted his defection to the *Weekly Standard*—gets into deep pondering, occasioned by the deep pondering of Francis Fukuyama's *Our Posthuman Future*. He applauds the book's warnings about the biotechnological threats confronting us, but suggests that these developments are only the logical next thing in the project of modernity and liberalism, the two being pretty much the same thing. Conservatives of different stripes, he says, are disillusioned with the liberalism/modernity train ride, and get off at

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different points. "Thus the economic libertarians wish to hold their position in the 1890s, the evangelicals in the 1920s, the Southern agrarians in the 1940s, and the *National Review* conservatives in the 1950s. For a century and a half after the French Revolution, Catholicism stood as the only major force opposed to modernity, and even after the great rush of Vatican II *aggiornamento*, Catholics essentially froze the modernity they were willing to accept at 1964. A variety of factors drew off the neoconservatives around 1972."

The conservatives and neocons who rallied around Reagan tended to share a yearning for something like a religious renewal, but theirs was, for the most part, a pretty thin and instrumental view of religion. "And yet, lacking a coherent unmodern philosophy, we can offer no compelling reasons for modernity to stop where we wish it to. The economic and political battles against communism, by returning liberalism to its original course, certainly changed the direction of modernity. But they did nothing to slow modernity down. Over the last few decades, for example, political scientists, sociologists, and scholars of the American Founding have all pointed out that a smidgen of religious belief seems necessary to prevent modern liberalism from devouring its own political and economic gains. But this insight hasn't brought us much, for a culture's religious belief doesn't derive from the desire that the culture have a religious belief. Meanwhile, since its Enlightenment beginning, modernity has conceived of religion as its great enemy, and the antireligious impulse of the modern world is still steaming on and on—unchecked by our recognition that it ought not to, that it ought to have stopped somewhere before this."

I am pleased to count myself as one of the "liberal writers" of the time who hoped the train could be stopped at another point described by Bottum. He writes, "Or, for another example, consider the question of whether we could have had a liberalism that was against abortion. We did manage to find an anti-Communist liberalism, after all—however much the Communists insisted that the future was theirs and that they were merely liberals in a hurry. And, hard as it is to remember, there was a moment around 1969 when several liberal writers were insisting that care for the poor and the weak demanded the rejection of abortion. But the liberationist impulse was simply too strong, and the sexual revolution too much fun. And so abortion came, despite opposition from those who wanted a modernity without it. Having bought a ticket this far, what means—what right, for that matter—did they have to stop the [train] from going further?"

He appreciates Fukuyama's respectful references to religious and philosophical arguments, including those offered by John Paul II, but: "Fukuyama, however, mistrusts thick accounts. He is too modern to think he can persuade us with the Pope's religious claim, too current to imagine he can restore us to Aristotle's philosophical view, and too scientific to rely on Aldous Huxley's literary understanding. But without some such support present generally in the culture, the government regulations for which he calls are doomed. The political pressure from activist groups will be too great. The moral confusion of politicians will be too massive. And, most of all, the internal motor of science will be too powerful." That's a pretty grim outlook, and he may be right. What we need, Bottum says, is someone who can "gather up the premodern elements necessary to maintain the political advances of modernity—and to build them into a new and coherent philosophical vehicle" that will prevent the threatening biotechnological train wreck.

I am very sympathetic to Bottum's forebodings, especially about the dynamics propelling what presents itself as, and often is, scientific progress. At the same time, it seems highly improbable that we will be rescued by a "philosophical vehicle," no matter how new or coherent. Unless philosophy is stretched to mean the Word that was in the beginning, and will see us through to the promised end. On days when I am tempted to resign myself to the inexorable triumph of the modernism/liberalism nexus that Bottum describes, I wonder if it might not take a catastrophic wreck, after which, with heroic labor, a chastened world repairs the damage and lays tracks in a different direction. On better days, I hold to the promise of the ever ancient, ever new, and only coherent truth that the human project cannot fail, not finally. And that because the Word became us, and by his victory we already participate in the life of the One who, by definition, cannot fail. Our circumstance is too hopeless for any lesser hope.

FT

Media Abused and Abusing

"Abused by the Media," while not without its own problems, is a valuable article by Peter Steinfels, religion columnist for the *New York Times*. Writing not in the *Times* but in the London-based *Tablet*, Steinfels' incisive critique of the media's coverage—and exploitation—of priestly sex scandals could give comfort to those who claim, wrongly, that the

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excitements and alarms of the past year are the creation of sensationalistic media driven by anti-Catholic animus. That is not Steinfels' claim. Whatever the intentions involved, the media brought to public attention, and not least to the attention of Catholics, some things that have gone very wrong in the governance of the Church. As I have said before, a scandal as great as any scandal exposed by the media was the scandal of the bishops' panicked reaction to the media storm at their Dallas meeting in June.

Steinfels tells the story of an upstate New York newspaper editor who was obsessed with people killed by lightning. Every time, anywhere in the country or the world, the wire services had a story about a death by lightning, the editor splashed it on the front page. "I imagine," writes Steinfels, "a local population cowering indoors at the first drops of rain, their sense of the odds of death-by-lightning-bolt completely skewed. Yet not a single word in the stories they read need have been untrue. The problem would have arisen from the dramatic character of the news, the construction of the central category (victims of lightning anywhere in the U.S. and sometimes elsewhere), the prominent play the stories received, and the absence of explanatory stories that would have placed these stories into the context of population figures, comparative risks from driving, boating, hunting, or catching cold, and the specific causes for lightning strikes." Something similar happened, Steinfels suggests, in the case of priests and sexual abuse.

"What was involved in the American clerical sex abuse crisis was the behavior of some 1.5 percent of the roughly 150,000 priests who served under hundreds of bishops in the course of half a century," Steinfels writes. "During that time psychological understanding, social attitudes, and legal expectations and practices regarding molestation of minors changed markedly. So did the Church's attitudes and policies—although often with a distressing lag. The reasons for that lag, which in some respects I consider morally culpable, deserve investigation. It is quite another matter, however, implicitly to measure bishops' decisions as though the bishops possessed—and deliberately and perversely ignored—knowledge and attitudes that were decades later in coming."

Reporting Religion

Referring to *Betrayal: The Crisis in the Catholic Church* (Little, Brown), which is a synthesis of the *Boston Globe*'s coverage, Steinfels notes that the media appear to be very pleased with their work. "I sense journalists already preparing acceptance speeches for next year's Pulitzer Prizes," he writes. I recently spoke to hundreds of reporters at the convention of the Religion Newswriters Association (RNA), meeting in Nashville. The lead reporter of the *Globe*'s coverage was also on the program, and he spoke with self-congratulatory glee about that paper's exposés, sprinkling his remarks with mocking references to Cardinal Law. At the end of his presentation, the applause was, at best, perfunctory.

Much more warmly received was the presentation by David Briggs of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, who is also president of RNA. He spoke movingly of how he had first had to come to terms with these questions when reporting on sexual abuse of minors in a Protestant missionary agency, and how the past year's reporting on the Catholic situation had posed for him painful ethical dilemmas with respect to issues of confidentiality, perspective, and the dangers of playing to stereotypes. In talking privately with other reporters, I was struck by how many gave evidence of an uneasy, if not guilty, conscience about their part in the treatment of the scandals. Again and again, one heard that they had to do what their editors wanted. "My editor made me do it" is, of course, an old line among reporters, but in this case, at least with some, it seemed to be more than a convenient evasion of responsibility.

Steinfels notes that some journalists justify themselves by appealing to polls showing that Catholics are furious at the bishops and do not think the media have been anti-Catholic. "Obviously," he writes, "this is a circular demonstration, since the reaction of Catholics has been based precisely on what they read, heard, and saw in the media. No one, certainly not the team assembling the *Globe*'s account, has gone beyond the familiar studied naiveté that assumes journalists merely expose the 'facts' and do nothing to define their meaning." As someone familiar with the journalistic arts, he then goes on to detail the ways in which the media are adept at skewing a story by choosing the "experts" they interview, by determining what constitutes "balance," by selective quotation, and by deciding which "side" gets the first and last word.

"In this case," says Steinfels, "the news media tended to bestow credibility heavily on a rather narrow set of experts—lawyers, therapists, and leaders of victims' groups, who had long been locked in legal battles with the bishops." But then there is also distortion that it is hard to believe is not deliberate. He notes, for instance, that R. Scott Appleby of Notre Dame felt obliged to put on his website a letter to an ABC producer detailing how a taped interview with him was edited, sentence after sentence, to remove all nuance. I can testify, as can almost anyone who deals regularly with the media, to similar experiences. Yet

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protesting is usually futile, for, as Steinfels notes, "not a single word in the stories need have been untrue." It is the way the story is framed, and the purpose to which true words are put, that is untrue.

All that having been said, we should not attack the messengers just because we don't like the message. I agree with Steinfels that some messengers (and their editors) should be attacked, and we should be alert to the systemic distortions of the big business that is "the news." At the same time, I know—and this was evident again at the RNA convention—how many reporters are devoutly religious (notably evangelical Protestant and Catholic), view their work as a vocation, genuinely want to be fair, and worry about purchasing journalistic plaudits at the price of truth. But the news is a corrupt and corrupting business in ways that go beyond the integrity or intentions of those who are in the business. And, of course, much the same is true of almost any other human enterprise, including religion, when it becomes a business.

A Perspective on "Perspective"

Yet there is a potential danger in Mr. Steinfels' way of putting things into perspective. Some may conclude that 1.5 percent of 150,000 priests over the course of half a century is not such a big deal. I suppose it depends, in part, upon how serious an offense one thinks the sexual abuse of minors to be. If we knew that 2,250 priests had committed murder or had been guilty of drug dealing in the past fifty years, I expect we would think it a very big deal indeed. I expect we would take it as an indication that something had gone very wrong. There is a necessary distinction between our judgment of the evil of an act and the incidence of an act. Much less than 1.5 percent of the general population commits murder or deals in drugs. Much more than 1.5 percent engages in sexual abuse—and much, much more than 1.5 percent if we use the loose definitions of sexual abuse current today (and adopted by the bishops in Dallas). The difference here, of course, is that we are talking about priests, who presumably are a moral notch above the general population.

What, in fact, appears to be the case is that somewhere around seven hundred priests have been accused or found guilty of sexual abuse in cases concentrated in the period from the late sixties to the early eighties. We are told that close to a billion dollars has been paid in settlements. By almost anybody's reckoning, that's real money. The overwhelming majority of cases involve adult men having sex in one form or another with postpubescent and older teenage boys. These relationships are ordinarily called homosexual. Common sense, reinforced by social scientific research of the obvious, tells us that homosexuals are more likely to engage in homosexual relations than heterosexuals. I don't wish to belabor the self-evident here, but it does seem that a discernible pattern begins to emerge.

Add to this that it is generally admitted that some seminaries and houses of formation did not, over an extended period of time, teach what the Church teaches about sexual morality, whether homosexual or heterosexual. Some seminaries do not just admit it; they boast of it. Such seminaries, and not just a few bishops, are known as being "gay-friendly." Many priests, over a long period of time, were taught that, the "official" teaching of the Church notwithstanding, sexual relations are inevitable and excusable, or even necessary to psychological and spiritual well-being. Priests who had sex with one another, or with teenage boys, told themselves, and perhaps believed, that it was not a sin. Some priests, and at least a couple of bishops, say that they believe they were involved in a "loving relationship" aimed at helping young men to "come to terms with their sexuality." Regardless of how sincere these people are, one might say that what they have done is a sign of, for lack of a better term, infidelity. These factors provide a bit more specificity and precision to the more innocuous-sounding proposition that 1.5 percent of 150,000 priests under hundreds of bishops engaged in sexual abuse over the course of half a century.

Unbalanced Balancing

These factors also make somewhat unsatisfying the conclusion to Mr. Steinfels' otherwise valuable article. He writes that the scandal has also been exploited by people who have different agendas for church reform. "From the left these include demands for more democratic church governance involving the laity and for reexamining priestly celibacy. From the right these include stamping out the 'culture of dissent' and scrutinizing homosexuals in seminaries. The danger is that these proposed reforms, instead of being debated on their own merits, may now be driven by seriously distorted media-generated assumptions about priests, bishops, and sexual abuse."

One wonders if that is not a fine example of the kind of journalistic balancing act that Mr. Steinfels elsewhere criticizes in his article. It provides the appearance of symmetry—"from the left, from the right"—where no symmetry exists. If the scandal is chiefly about priests fiddling with boys, why would more democracy in church government be the solution? So lay people decide whether the church roof is replaced this year or next, or have a say in electing the bishop. So what? As for celibacy, if

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instances of clerical sexual abuse, including homosexual abuse, are as frequent in churches where the clergy can marry—and the evidence is that they are—celibacy would seem to be, at most, marginally related to the problems that produced the scandals.

The second agenda of reform—the one "from the right"—would seem to be somewhat more pertinent to the problems at hand. I don't insist on the phrase "culture of dissent," and "stamping out" sounds awfully heavy handed, but perhaps Mr. Steinfels would agree that homosexual priests who reject the teaching that fiddling with boys is gravely sinful are, all things being equal, more likely to fiddle with boys. As for "scrutinizing" homosexuals in seminaries, as Mr. Steinfels knows, some people think they shouldn't be in seminaries to begin with. If there are identified or self-identified homosexuals in the seminary—never mind men who declare themselves to be gay—surely he would agree that it would be advisable, as a matter of prudence, to keep an eye on them. Especially if they, as a matter of prurience, are keeping an eye on their fellow seminarians. Unless, of course, as I do not think is the case, Mr. Steinfels thinks that men who intend to do, and approve of doing, things that the Church teaches are gravely sinful should be allowed to take solemn vows of perfect and perpetual chastity.

"Abused by the Media" is, as I say, a useful article. More the pity that the conclusion at which Mr. Steinfels arrives exemplifies the journalistic practices he so incisively criticizes.

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WHY ISRAEL MATTERS

The subject of Jews and Christians in "Christian America" is riddled with difficulties, and we should have no illusions about their being soon resolved. The contradictory legacy of the twentieth century—which witnessed the Holocaust in Europe as well as the birth of the State of Israel and the dramatic advance of Jewish security and success in America—does not exhaust the ways in which we can think about the Jewish-Christian relationship in the century ahead. At present and for the foreseeable future, one important factor is that most American Jews are not *religiously* Jewish. This is a factor addressed by many Jewish thinkers; for instance, by Elliott Abrams in his book *Faith or Fear*, which bears a subtitle very much to the point of our discussion, *How Jews Can Survive in a Christian America*. (Although I would like to think the subject is not survival but flourishing.) Abrams vigorously makes the case that the commitment of Jews to Jewishness, rather than to Judaism, is neither faithful to Jewish history nor capable of sustaining the Jewish community in the future.

The dominantly secular character of American Jewry is closely related to Jewish anxieties about the new assertiveness of religion in American public life. If most Jews do not see barbed wire, they are nonetheless made exceedingly nervous about any reference to "Christian America." Moreover, there is a curious conflation of developments in this country and developments in Israel. Both there and here, secular Jews worry about the political ascendancy in Israel of those who are routinely described as "the ultra-Orthodox." In public discussions, the analogy is frequently drawn with "the religious right" in this country. The argument is made that in both instances religion is a threat to secular democracy—with the adjective "secular" inseparable from "democracy." In the Israeli circumstance, the argument cannot be lightly discounted.

The Orthodox in Israel—and the more rigorously Orthodox in this country, such as the Hasidim—seem to have little experience or appreciation of democracy. One reason for this is that, before the establishment of Israel in 1948, Judaism had never had the experience of being the religio-cultural establishment in a modern state. Since the Roman occupation and the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, Jews have not borne the chief responsibility of building and maintaining a nation. This is in sharpest contrast to the Christian experience, which since the Emperor Constantine has had seventeen centuries of wildly diverse experiments, both successful and spectacularly flawed, in relating its theology, moral teaching, and religious institutions to civil society and the political order. The more seriously religious forms of Judaism, especially the Orthodox, have yet to demonstrate that there are authentically religious warrants by which publicly assertive Judaism supports, rather than threatens, modern democracy. In the vast span of history, the short fifty-four years of the State of Israel have provided the only laboratory for that demonstration, and at present the outcome of that experiment is uncertain.

In Christian America, most Jews believed, at least in the latter half of the twentieth century, that the more secular the society the safer it is for Jews. Some of us have argued to the contrary that the naked public square is a very dangerous place for Jews and other minorities. Where there are in public no transcendent aspirations to the good, there are also no transcendent inhibitions against evil, including the evil of anti-Semitism. This argument has been advanced

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also by Jewish thinkers such as Irving Kristol, Midge Decter, and the company of neoconservatives around publications such as *Commentary*, the *Public Interest*, and, more recently, the *Weekly Standard*. It has surely made a dent, but most American Jews, it must be admitted, are still wedded to the ideology of the naked public square. Now it is being extended to Israel, with unforeseen consequences for Christian America's perception of both Jews and Israel, the two being, of course, intimately connected.

Among my Christian friends, and especially among evangelical Protestants who have little personal experience with Jews or Judaism, there is frequently expressed puzzlement about the secularism of American Jewry. Judaism is for evangelicals a religious category, understood in terms of biblical history. They do not understand the disjunction between that Judaism and the Jewish reality in American life. At the same time, these evangelicals—who provide most of the leaders and troops of "the religious right"—have been and are at present the strongest non-Jewish supporters of the State of Israel. For many of them, Israel and the Jewish people are crucial players in their apocalyptic scenarios for the End Time. Needless to say, many Jews are not happy with the eschatological roles in which they are cast by these evangelicals. Irving Kristol, on the other hand, has succinctly remarked, "They can have their theology. I'll take their support for Israel."

American Christians in general, including Catholics and oldline Protestants, have been very supportive of Israel. That could change, I believe it would almost certainly change, were Israel to perceive itself and be perceived as a thoroughly secular phenomenon. The reasons for support for Israel in the past have been several. First was the Holocaust and the preeminent Jewish claim on victim status. But, despite dramatic reminders through movies and other media, the memory of the Holocaust fades. It is true that Holocaust studies are entrenched in textbooks from grade school through college, but to most young people today the Holocaust is history as ancient as the Civil War or the fall of Rome. That will, inevitably, be more the case ten or thirty years from now.

In addition, especially among liberals and leftists, there is a keen awareness of what Israel has meant for its neighbors, especially the Palestinians. Even the most determined defender of Israel acknowledges that Israel has had the upper hand—militarily, economically, and politically—and that hand has sometimes been brutal. Such defenders say that, in view of the many threats to Israel, it is sometimes necessary to be brutal, but the fact is that, looking at Israel or at the situation of Jews in America, fewer and fewer Americans, perhaps even fewer and fewer Jewish Americans, find plausible the connection between being Jewish and being a victim of history. With respect to Israel, that could of course rapidly change were, God forbid, Israel to suffer a severe setback or defeat at the hands of its enemies. Nobody should want to pay that price for reinvigorating the support of the American people.

During the more than forty years of the Cold War, which is most of the history of the State of Israel, a major reason for support was Israel's alliance in a free world threatened by Communist totalitarianism. Like the Holocaust, the Cold War is history and will increasingly be viewed as ancient history. Today the claim is made that Israel is America's best friend in the Middle East, but most Americans are likely inclined to the not unreasonable view that, were it not for Israel, America would not have so many enemies in that part of the world. As the believability of the past reasons for support fade or disappear, fresh attention must be paid the deepest and most abiding reason, namely, that Israel is a Jewish state, and "Jewish" is understood as a religious category. However inarticulate they may be about it, American Christians intuit that there is a divinely ordered entanglement between Christians and Jews that is not there with any other people. Certainly not with Muslims, for the obvious reason that Christians can understand their doctrines, history, and hopes without reference to Islam, while Christianity makes no sense, Christianity would not be, without Judaism.

This deepest and most abiding reason for support for the State of Israel is today being undermined, I believe, by those who would have Israel redefine itself in purely secular terms. Through Jewish friends and occasional visits to Israel, one can appreciate, at least in part, how infuriating the "ultra-Orthodox" may sometimes be, but to force a choice between extreme secularism and extreme religion is a perilous game. Without the religious definition, one must wonder what the identity of Israel would be. A Jewish nation without Judaism is merely a tribal phenomenon, inviting obscene comparisons to the "blood and soil" nationalism that, through the horror of the Third Reich, brought Israel into being. It could even invite the enemies of Israel to revive the infamous slander of the United Nations General Assembly, since rescinded, that Zionism is a form of racism.

In Israel today, with echoes among some Jews in this country, voices are raised in favor of "Post-Zionism." Limor Livnat, a prominent Israeli political figure, spoke to this phenomenon in an address to the Middle East Forum in New York City. "Post-Zionism is in effect what used to be called anti-Zionism. Post-Zionists claim that they do not oppose the idea of the State of Israel, but claim rather that

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the task has been completed. They suggest that the idea of a Jewish state is inherently racist, that the words 'Jewish soul' should be removed from our national anthem, and that Israel should be a state for all its citizens—a phrase that really implies that Israel should cease to be a Jewish state in all senses. Israel, they argue, should mimic as closely as possible the Western liberal democracies."

But Israel is not possible apart from being Jewish, Livnat contends. "There are certain ideas that keep a people alive. Once those ideas fade from the collective mind and heart, that people loses its reason to live. A nation that has no unique national character and a people without challenges for the future has nothing to be unified about. With no past, there is no future. . . . Liberalism is not Judaism. Ideas such as majority rule, minority rights, and distributive justice are all to be found in Jewish thought and history. The Jewish people did not return to Israel, however, to foster a rebirth of Western liberal democracy. The only 'ism' they came to Israel for is Judaism. . . . And if Israel has no special role as a democracy and as a proponent of Judeo-Christian values, then on what basis is Israel entitled to any sort of special relationship with the United States?"

Of course only Jews can decide how to be Jews, whether it is a matter of Jewishness or of Judaism. In this country, we witness the most promising relationship between Jews and Christians since the Church condemned Marcion as a heretic in the second century. That relationship is strengthened by Jews deciding for Judaism. That decision may also have a strong bearing upon the security of the State of Israel, to the extent that its security depends upon the support of America.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ I won't go so far as to say that some of my best friends are, but some of my friends are ethicists, and I don't want to be too hard on them. But from time to time I've been compelled to note that hiring someone to watch the ethical store—whether the subject be bioethics or business ethics—is a dubious undertaking. By the very structure of the relationship to what they're supposed to be watching, ethicists end up being more lapdogs than watchdogs. Gordon Marino, a philosopher at St. Olaf, notes that the business ethics industry is doing very well at $2 billion per year, but business ethics is not doing so well, as witness Enron, WorldCom, and other scandals. What is basically wrong with the ethics industry, says Professor Marino, is the idea that we can subcontract the work of moral judgment. "First, there are simply no grounds for believing that a person can become an authority on matters moral in the same way that he might on market strategies; that is, by mastering the appropriate information and literature. You can memorize Kant and still be a moral dunce. As Aristotle taught us, moral percipience and judgment are not the product of reading moral treatises and applying them to case histories. Aristotle counsels that if you need moral guidance seek out a person who has succeeded in living a moral life rather than someone who has succeeded in memorizing moral arguments. More important than the lack of philosophical foundation, the idea of ethics experts invites us to believe that the ethical implications of what I am doing are not my business but rather the business of the ethics office down the hall. After all, if there are experts on ethics, then who am I, a nonexpert, to pass moral judgments? Be they ethics audits, codes, or 'ethics fitness seminars,' none of the numinous pseudo-products of the ethics industry will restore integrity to commerce. The issues that provoked the present crisis were not overly subtle. You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows, and CEOs do not need a business ethicist to tell them right from wrong. What they need is the character to do the right thing, which is to say, the mettle to avoid the temptation to talk themselves out of their knowledge of right and wrong even if that knowledge lowers their profit margins."

■ For three full days, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), sat down with Peter Seewald, a prominent German journalist, and fielded his questions on, it seems, almost everything. The result is a thick book just out from Ignatius Press, *God and the World* (460 pp., $18.95). The conversation tackles the existence of God, theodicy, the feminine dimensions of the Divine, biblical inspiration, the uniqueness of Jesus, and a host of other matters that an intelligent interlocutor might want to take up with Ratzinger. In reading it, I am reminded of his masterful *Introduction to Christianity*, published more than thirty years ago, and cannot help but wonder again about the many books he might have written were it not for his selfless devotion to the usually thankless tasks of CDF. Herewith, selected more or less at random, a few fragments:

— *On the Assumption of Mary.* "The dogma says . . . that in Mary's case what baptism ensures for us all, that is,

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dwelling 'enthroned' with God 'in heaven' (God is heaven!), has already been put into effect for Mary. Baptism (being united with Christ) has achieved its full effect. With us this being united with Christ, being raised up, is still very inadequate. Not in her case. . . . She has entered into full community with Christ. And part of this community is another corporal identity, which we cannot imagine. In brief: the essential point of this dogma is that Mary is wholly with God, entirely with Christ, completely a 'Christian.'"

— *Will Mary be declared "Co-redemptrix"?* "What is signified by this is already better expressed in other titles of Mary, while the term 'Co-redemptrix' departs to too great an extent from the language of Scripture and of the Fathers and therefore gives rise to misunderstandings. . . . Everything comes from Christ; Mary, too, is everything that she is through him. The word 'Co-redemptrix' would obscure this origin. A correct intention is being expressed in the wrong way."

— *On the papacy and political power.* "The pope does not strictly need to have a state—but he does need freedom, a guarantee of secular independence; he cannot stand in the service of some government. The primacy was only able to develop in Rome because the imperial government had moved to Byzantium. Only this could provide the requisite freedom. The idea that the papacy became so effective because this was the seat of government seems to me to be turning things upside down somewhat. . . . Later on, the Papal States grew out of this situation, bringing with them many disastrous associations, until they were finally lost in 1870—thank God, we would have to say today."

— *In the government of the Church, the pope and curia are expected to do too much.* "We are indeed thinking about the extent to which further relief might be found through decentralization. . . . The Second Vatican Council has defined the bishops' conferences as the form giving concrete shape to supraregional units. . . . There have to be supraregional structures of cooperation that remain more of a loose association and do not degenerate into great bureaucracies or lead to domination by officials. [They] can take over some of the work from Rome."

— *On the contemporary bias against hierarchy, and the relationship between clergy and laity.* "I dispute the translation that gives 'sacred lordship' as the meaning of 'hierarchy.' I am persuaded that the word means 'sacred origin.' It means that the Church does not spring from any decisions of ours, but only ever anew from the Lord himself, from the sacrament. The priesthood is what connects the Church with the Lord. It is the way in which the Church transcends herself, not taking her origin from meetings, decisions, learning, or the power of organization, but always and ever and only owing it to Christ. [In Germany] the laity set up their own representation and then the clergy, on their side, form their own groups. This is complete nonsense. What are the clergy there for at all? . . . Their task is precisely to ensure that people do not shape the Church in accordance with their wishes, but rather that she remains in the hands of the Lord. To be a layman is the normal form of being a Christian; the normal form in which the gospel is lived out in this world. That Christianity takes hold of the world and reshapes it, that is the true apostolate of the laity."

— *On the Church in the U.S.* "American Catholicism has nowadays become one of the determinative factors in the universal Church. The Church in America is very dynamic. She is, of course, also characterized by tensions. . . . This is a Church that is very strongly bringing to bear the vital element of religion: the courage to give one's life to and out of faith, in the service of faith. . . . I believe that it is particularly in the American sphere that people are taking up Catholicism as a whole and trying to relate it anew to the modern world."

— *On the hope for Christian unity.* "We go forward together. It's not a matter of our wanting to achieve certain processes of integration, but we hope that the Lord will awaken people's faith everywhere in such a way that it overflows from one to the other, and the one Church is there. As Catholics, we are persuaded that the basic shape of this one Church is given us in the Catholic Church, but that she is moving toward the future and will allow herself to be educated and led by the Lord. In that sense we do not picture for ourselves any particular model of integration but simply look to march on in faith under the leadership of the Lord—who knows the way."

"I belong to a Church that is alive and young and that is carrying her work on fearlessly into the future," said John XXIII, and Ratzinger says he heartily agrees. A big problem, however, is "progressives" who adamantly defend the status quo. "Nowadays, particularly among the most modern representatives of Catholicism, there is a tendency toward uniformity. Whatever is alive and new, anything that does not conform to the academic outlines or to the decisions of commissions or synods, is regarded with suspicion and is excluded as being reactionary. . . . I believe that a great deal of tolerance is required within the Church, that the diversity of paths is something in accordance with the breadth of Catholicity. . . . And that is exactly what the office of

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pope, and the office of a bishop, is there for, to guarantee the breadth, on the one hand, and, on the other, to open up what is closed, what could lead to sectarianism, and to integrate it into the whole."

■ In New Jersey the judicial usurpation of politics is not an aberration to be feared but, it would seem, the established order. When Robert Toricelli was way behind in the Senate race, the Democrats pulled him out of the contest and replaced him with Frank Lautenberg, even though New Jersey law explicitly said that a candidate could not be replaced so late in a campaign. The state's Supreme Court, in what it called a "liberal" interpretation of the law, simply overrode its provisions. Very liberal indeed. On another issue, fourteen gays and lesbians have brought suit to force New Jersey to grant them wedding licenses. The *New Jersey Law Journal* runs two editorials on the subject. The first argues at length that the state's license application form does not specify anything that would prevent same-sex marriages, except for assuming that one partner is male and the other female. That assumption, the editors opine, is now obsolete, for "We are, undoubtedly, becoming more enlightened." Unfortunately, the people are not so enlightened. The second editorial, "Who Shall Decide?", acknowledges that "same-sex marriage does not seem to be popular with the voters." Where it has been put to a vote, it has been voted down. Legislators are also opposed. Therefore, "In choosing the courts, the plaintiffs wisely chose the potentially more hospitable forum. . . . That the sweeping changes the plaintiffs seek may also be a province of the Legislature does not preclude action by a court. Our history is replete with examples of court-initiated profound social change where the Legislature has been silent." The editors suggest that the court might follow the example of Vermont, where a court ordered the legislature to approve same-sex unions, saying that, if it did not do so "in an orderly and expeditious fashion," the court would. The editors conclude, "The plaintiffs' goals are sound and readily achievable by cooperation between the judicial and legislative branches of our government." Ah yes, cooperation. We tell you what to do and you do it or we'll do it for you. That "notorious" symposium of 1996 was titled "The End of Democracy?" At this point, at least in New Jersey, we may be permitted to omit the question mark.

■ This will be brief, and then I do not intend to revisit the matter unless new provocations make further comment imperative. In the June issue of *Commentary*, Senior Editor Gabriel Schoenfeld published "Israel and the Anti-Semites," in which he noted my criticism here of another *Commentary* article which, in my judgment, seemed to suggest the generalization that critics of Israel are anti-Semites who want to kill Jews. Mr. Schoenfeld said of my comment, "Such are the tortuous rationalizations to which the swell of worldwide anti-Semitism has led." Given the context of his remarks in an article dealing with "the anti-Semites," it is not surprising that some readers of *Commentary* and this journal thought he was accusing me of rationalizing anti-Semitism. They thought he was saying what he seemed to be saying, namely, that my comments were of a piece with, or somehow reflective of, the swell of anti-Semitism. I chose to respond irenically, writing in this space that "I note, but decline to entertain, the possibility that Mr. Schoenfeld is suggesting that anti-Semitism led me to write what I did." Others responded differently. Mr. Stephen Hubert, in a letter published in the October *Commentary*, wrote: "Father Neuhaus has been portrayed by Mr. Schoenfeld as anti-Semitic and anti-Israel, which he emphatically is not. . . . Mr. Schoenfeld has indulged in yellow journalism of the worst sort, damaging the integrity of *Commentary* and the reputation of Father Neuhaus alike. I strongly believe that he is owed a full apology and retraction. . . ." In the same issue, Mr. Schoenfeld responds at length, refusing to apologize or retract, offering a garbled version of my views, and asserting that "the conclusion seems inescapable" that my purpose is to "terminate the debate about Pius XII by dramatically raising the stakes for its Jewish interlocutors, raising the specter of a return of anti-Semitism and an end of support for Israel. If I am right about this, it marks an ominous turn for a leading Christian thinker." Mr. Schoenfeld is quite wrong about that. I do believe that, in the debate over U.S. policy toward Israel, some Jewish writers have at times dramatically raised the stakes for interlocutors who do not share their views by suggesting that they are anti-Semitic. And an "ominous turn" toward what? Not toward anti-Semitism, I am told. I am solemnly assured that in no way did Mr. Schoenfeld intend to suggest, insinuate, imply, or otherwise give the impression that he thinks I am anti-Semitic or even complicit in the slightest flirtation with anti-Semitism. I am pleased to know that, while, at the same time, observing that Mr. Schoenfeld has an extremely odd way of not saying what I am assured he is not saying. And now, as far as I am concerned, we can all, as they say, move on.

■ I should have mentioned that, and thank Father John Ubel of St. Thomas Academy in Mendota Heights, Minnesota, for reminding me. I wrote that the confession of sins and "absolution" before Mass may lead many Catholics to think that sacramental confession is no longer necessary. Fr. Ubel points out

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that the Confiteor in the old Latin Mass, with its prayers at the foot of the altar to which the people said "Amen," had virtually the same words. True, but the people did not say all the words, and most probably did not understand the Latin or follow the English translation in a missal. Much to the point is Fr. Ubel's further observation about the decline in the practice of frequent confession. "One may wish to start with the decline in the reception of the sacrament by priests themselves. After all, *Nemo dat non quod habet*, 'You cannot give what you do not have.' We may need go no farther than that."

■ They're going to die anyway, so why not derive some good from their deaths? We even talk about "redeeming" the tragedy of so many deaths. Many years ago, the Methodist ethicist Paul Ramsey discussed how seductive this way of thinking and talking is. Then the subject was using aborted fetuses for research purposes; now the debate is about using embryos in research related to stem cells, cloning, and the such. Writing in the *Weekly Standard*, Lutheran ethicist Gilbert Meilaender provides grist for moral reflection: "The issue of embryo research is not precisely the same as fetal research, of course, but the insight into our ready recourse to the quasi-religious language of finding some redeeming good in what we do is illuminating. We need to think again about the spare-embryo argument. Initially appealing as it may be, offering it seems a chance to move forward with research while still drawing a significant moral line, it begins to lose its force the longer we ponder it and the harder we press on it. The very form of the argument—'he'll die anyway; we might as well get some good from his dying'—seduces us into supposing that all moral evils must be forms of 'harm.' 'No harm, no foul' may work well for officiating basketball, but it does not work well for sorting through our moral obligations. Reducing all moral evils to harm, we blind ourselves to issues of dignity and justice—as if, for example, we would not wrong a permanently unconscious person by selling tickets for others to observe him. We need to slow down, think again, and draw back, lest we train ourselves to think in ways that diminish us as a people. Perhaps this means—though it's hard to say for sure—that the pace of medical progress must be slower than it could be. If so, that only means that here, as in so many other areas of research, we accept and honor necessary moral limits. For, as Paul Ramsey also put it, 'the moral history of mankind is more important than its medical history.'"

■ It is hardly a surprise that Peter Singer, the philosopher from nowhere, is a proponent of world government. He employs a very familiar trope: "The twentieth century's conquest of space made it possible for a human being to look at our planet from a point not on it, and so to see it, literally, as one world. Now the twenty-first century faces the task of developing a suitable form of government for that single world." He recognizes that the idea of world government, which in its modern form goes back at least to Immanuel Kant, has its skeptics. "There is little political support for such ideas at present. Apart from the threat that the idea poses to the self-interest of the citizens of the rich nations, many would say it puts too much at risk, for gains that are too uncertain. It is widely believed that a world government would be, at best, an unchecked bureaucratic behemoth that makes the bureaucracy of the European Union look like a lean and efficient operation. At worst, it would become a global tyranny, unchecked and unchallengable. Those thoughts have to be taken seriously. They present a challenge that should not be beyond the best minds in the fields of political science and public administration, once those people adjust to the new reality of the global community and turn their attention to issues of government beyond national boundaries." The bureaucrats of the European Union will likely be insulted, and rightly so, by the suggestion that they don't have "the best minds in the fields of political science and public administration." Remember Bill Buckley's line about the Harvard faculty and the Boston telephone directory.

■ Garry Wills' *Why I Am a Catholic* has already taken up enough space in this section. But I cannot resist mentioning Denis Donoghue's fine review in, of all places, Wills' home base, the *New York Review of Books*. Donoghue dissects, inter alia, the ways in which Wills wants to relocate the Real Presence in "the people of God" rather than in the elements that become the Body and Blood of Christ. Donoghue writes, "Wills seems to want to be a pre-Tridentine Catholic, i.e., one who believes that the Council of Trent introduced severities of doctrine and practice that were unnecessary and improper. He would apparently confine his faith to the articles of the Apostles' Creed, where Transubstantiation is not mentioned." A pre-Tridentine Catholic. Think about it. Is it possible that, in very important ways, those who make such a point about being "post-Vatican II Catholics" are really pre-Tridentine Catholics?

■ "I believe there is a reason that history has matched this nation with this time," said President Bush in his address a year after September 11, with the Statue of Liberty in the background. History does not have purposes, but the Lord of history does, so Bush is then

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more explicit: "We cannot know all that lies ahead. Yet we do know that God has placed us together in this moment, to grieve together, to stand together, to serve each other and our country. And the duty we have been given—defending America and our freedom—is also a privilege we share." Then he becomes yet more Christianly explicit: "Ours is the cause of human dignity: freedom guided by conscience, and guarded by peace. This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind. That hope drew millions to this harbor. That hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it." The last two sentences are, of course, from the prologue to the Gospel of John, where the reference is to Christ. America is not Christ. Bush's language revives a current in American thought critically analyzed by Ernest Tuveson in *Redeemer Nation*. The connection between American history and providential purpose received its most eloquent and nuanced expression in the language of Lincoln, but has been a staple in our public rhetoric. It is there in the Declaration of Independence, in the speeches and private correspondence of almost all the founders, and, after Lincoln, presidents Wilson, Reagan, and now Bush have taken to it quite naturally. Among our cultural elites, ACLU types fret about such language violations of the "separation of church and state," but most dismiss it as rhetorical candy tossed to the patriotic masses. Their attitude is that of Gibbon toward sundry religions in the Roman Empire—for the philosophers they are equally false; for the masses they are equally true; and for the rulers they are equally useful. Theologians and thoughtful Christian leaders are rightly worried about the abuses that sometimes attend what is called civic religion. The master worrier on this score was Reinhold Niebuhr, who warned against dividing the world into "the children of light and the children of darkness." Some theologians condemn the use of John 1 in the September 11 speech as manifest blasphemy. I don't think so. It goes right up to the line and threatens to go over it. America is not Christ; we are not the redeemer nation in a way analogous to his being the redeemer of the world. But Judeo-Christian and specifically Christian tropes are a common feature of this President's public rhetoric. He has gifted speech writers who share his undoubtedly deep Christian convictions. He understands, as many public figures have not and do not, that American virtues such as tolerance and resolve are grounded in religious, and mainly Christian, commitments. He understands that, in moments of great public solemnity, addressing questions of life and death, war and peace, no other language will do if he is to effectively communicate with the American people. More than that, I believe it is the language required to convey his own understanding of history's drama. In short, such civic religion—if that is the right term for it—is both risky and inevitable. It is not, however, just my theological scrupulosity that makes me wish he had said, "This hope, too, is a light that shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it." It is a small but important difference. That being said, it is a refreshing thing to have a President who gives firm and graceful expression to the truth that we are a nation under God—meaning, first of all, under judgment—and that, as Lincoln insisted, the Almighty has His purposes that we must humbly strive to discern and obey, resting our final confidence not in our certainty but in His mercy.

■ Popular columnist Bob Greene is out at the *Chicago Tribune*. It was discovered that he had a sexual contact with an eighteen-year-old woman eleven years ago. Radio host Dennis Prager and Greene had worked together in defense of a four-year-old boy, Danny Warburton, whom the Illinois Supreme Court took away from his family and gave to his birth father, who later abandoned the boy again. Prager writes: "I believe that every man and woman has a moral bank account. Our good deeds are deposits into that account, our bad deeds are withdrawals. It is our task as human beings to try to judge others' accounts fairly, since every one of us has withdrawals—and if our deposits are ignored, we are all doomed to be judged worthless by others. When assessing people, what is therefore called for is perspective. We need it when judging anyone: strangers, friends, spouses, employees. In the overall context of a person's life, is there a large amount in the person's moral account? Then, while not denying the person's sins—the withdrawals from his or her moral bank account—we must acknowledge the large balance that remains. Despite this particular withdrawal, Bob Greene's moral bank account remains quite large. I have never personally met Bob Greene. During the Danny Warburton crisis, we spoke by phone almost every day, and only occasionally since. So this is not a brief on behalf of a friend. This is a brief on behalf of a good man who sinned. There are many children in Illinois and elsewhere who lead better lives, who are more loved, because of Bob Greene's work on their behalf. Bob's own children need to know that and never to forget it. Their dad strayed morally, and he has acknowledged it. But their dad is a good man. They should know that a lot of us know that. And always will. Not least, the Warburton and Prager families. Whatever sins he has committed pale alongside the good he has done, just as whatever good the five Illinois justices [in the Warburton case] did pales

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alongside the bad they did. When I realize that the five justices who ruined lives are still honored citizens in Illinois and that Bob Greene, who helped so many, is in disgrace, I recall the ancient Jewish proverb that the good get their punishments in this world and the bad in the next." Others will no doubt point out that, given the storm over miscreant priests, and the example of the bishops at Dallas, the *Tribune* had to do what it did.

■ A bishop publicly released the names of priests who, over many years, had been accused of sexually abusing minors. With a few exceptions, the alleged offenses occurred from the late sixties to the early eighties. It appears that some admitted their guilt, while others claimed to be innocent. In explaining why he released the names, the bishop indicated that the public had a right to know how many and which priests had been accused, adding, "Telling the truth cannot be wrong." Well, not quite. If someone tells me that you are beating your wife, and I, regardless of the truth of the matter, tell someone else that I was told you are beating your wife, I am telling the truth, but it is very wrong to do so. "Transparency," the virtue du jour in the wake of the scandals, can be achieved at too high a price. What is formally "telling the truth" is not always truthful; nor is it fair to those whose reputation and life's work may be destroyed.

■ Chilling developments are brought to our attention by Eric Brown of the Ethics and Public Policy Center. "Brave New China," appearing in the *Weekly Standard*, describes the ways in which that country is rushing pell mell into the strange new worlds of biotechnology. A "stem cell engineering institute" being constructed near Tianjin plans to fill its vaults with a half million embryonic stem cells, and Chinese scientists have been creating cloned human embryos and letting them grow for the purposes of conducting experiments and harvesting spare parts. Although much of Maoism has been debunked and many Chinese subscribe to the motto "to get rich is glorious," Brown points out that the dominant doctrine among Chinese intellectuals and planners is still Marxist. "The Marxist shares none of our concern over technological alienation from nature or human nature, but rather is concerned entirely with how to deal with the problem of capitalist exploitation. One need only consider the human catastrophe of earlier Marxist revolutions (or even the devastation of nature in China or the former Soviet Union) to know where such frenzied technological hubris likely leads. The power to remake man genetically presupposes the willingness to treat human life as a genetic project. It distorts every aspect of our humanity into a material problem with a potential material solution. Given the suppression of intellectual and religious freedom in China today, there is at present little effective moral or political opposition to the idea that genetic engineering is destiny. Moreover, one can only expect that our own biotechnical innovations, once in Chinese hands, will be used to further the totalitarian project, regardless of the libertarian or humanitarian motives that might have inspired their creation here." In addition to the one-child-per-couple policy of population control, the Chinese government is increasingly explicit about its embrace of eugenics, resulting in abortion or infanticide for "defectives," and the sterilization of hundreds of thousands of women. All this in the name of a revolution aimed at "the new man in the new society"—a revolution that could end up making the human ravages of Mao's cultural revolution look benign by comparison.

■ I doubt if it should be at the top of anybody's list of crises needing attention, but there is this ongoing argument about whether the Creed in the Liturgy should begin with "I believe" or "We believe." It was changed to the latter some three decades ago, and now Rome wants it changed back. Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie, Pennsylvania, has been for years a major player in what is termed liturgical renewal, and he recently gave a major speech decrying in somewhat alarmist tones what he views as Rome's efforts to slow down, or even reverse, all the good things that have happened. He said, "The official Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly states why we proclaim *we believe*. '*I believe* (Apostles' Creed) is the faith of the Church professed personally by each believer, principally during baptism. But *we believe* (Nicene Creed) is the faith of the Church confessed by the liturgical assembly of believers.' (§167)." He adds that for Rome "to void this principle is a liturgical setback for community participation in the eucharist—it is a regression in the understanding of the community dimension of eucharist." The Catechism, however, does not quite say what he says it says. It says, "'We believe' is the faith of the Church confessed by bishops assembled in council or more generally by the liturgical assembly of believers." It then concludes, "'I believe' is also the Church, our mother, responding to God by faith as she teaches us to say both 'I believe' and 'We believe.'" Yet more interesting is the reason Bishop Trautman objects to Rome's proposal. "Are we to tell our people now that the bishops' approval of these texts some thirty-five years ago and Rome's confirmation of that approval was flawed? Has the English-speaking world been praying with inaccurate texts confirmed by the Holy See?" I suppose the answer to both questions is yes. Liberals are generally insistent that Rome should admit that it makes

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mistakes. Apparently it's a bit dicier when the suggestion is that bishops should admit that bishops make mistakes. Although in this speech and many others Bishop Trautman insists that liturgical renewal means perpetual change, and it is hard to know why something should be changed if it is not flawed. As for the English texts, it is true, as I think almost all scholars acknowledge, that many of them are inaccurate translations. At least as big a problem is that the English translations are so banal and vulgar. Recall Father George Rutler's answer when asked if there is anything he misses since leaving the Anglican communion: "Oh yes, the liturgy in English." So what are we to make of Bishop Trautman's complaint? With respect, he is an unhappy defender of the old guard of a liturgical establishment that over more than three decades has done a lot of things that many Catholics, and now Rome, think are deeply flawed. Why should that be so hard to accept, especially if one is devoted, as Bishop Trautman so manifestly is, to open-ended criticism and change? Why should the professional establishment of liturgists be exempt from such criticism and change? I believe these are valid questions, and more and more people seem to agree. The day may come when, with the exception of a few dissenters who have a steep stake in continuing to do what was done before, one will be able to say that we believe that.

■ Here comes not quite everybody wanting to help me keep my "Here Comes Everybody" title for the Catholic Church in play, despite Jody Bottum's cavils. It is pointed out that the Catholic columnist Tim Unsworth titled his memoir *Here Comes Everybody*, attributing it to James Joyce. And Anthony Burgess' introduction to Joyce is titled "Here Comes Everybody," with apparent reference to the Church. Thanks for the efforts, but now if somebody could come up with evidence that Joyce actually said the Church is "Here Comes Everybody."

■ The informed estimate of Alexander N. Yakovlev is that under Lenin, Stalin, and their successors sixty million citizens were killed, mostly by political murder, and millions more died of starvation, mostly by regime-induced famines. Yakovlev should know. He reached the heights of the Politburo and Central Committee and, under Gorbachev, promoted the *perestroika* that presaged the end of the evil empire. Now repentant for his role in the terror, Yakovlev heads a committee working for what he admits is the hopeless task of providing restitution for the victims, but in *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* (Yale University Press) he draws on hitherto secret documents to at least clarify the record. Despite the author's frequently disjointed writing style, this is a gripping story that, among other things, decisively debunks the myth that Stalin was an aberration who distorted the more benign intentions of Lenin. In agreement with scholars such as Richard Pipes, Yakovlev demonstrates that the murderous theories, passions, and policies were thoroughly Leninist. His chapter on the intelligentsia is a devastating account of the ways in which intellectuals, artists, and writers eagerly collaborated with the regime in doing one another in. He shows how, by way of sharpest contrast, churchmen offered courageous resistance, producing many thousands of martyrs. Stalin attempted to create an alternative "Red church"—in a way similar to Hitler's *Deutsche Christen* among German Protestants—but was soon forced to give up for the lack of willing collaborators. He then decided on the more successful course of infiltrating the Russian Orthodox Church by appointing KGB agents and other puppets to high ecclesiastical positions. For many of today's young people, all this is ancient history from which we have long since "moved on." That is a great pity. Remembering the martyrs is a solemn duty. Remembering the consequences when the rule of God is displaced by the ideology of militant secularism—whether explicitly or just "functionally" atheistic—is necessary to preventing a repeat of history's horrors, from which, it is to be feared, many Americans have not learned what must be learned if the foundations of freedom are to be secured.

■ For the record: Several readers have pointed out that I misspoke when I said my friend James Finn and I "launched" *Worldview* magazine in the early seventies. They are right. *Worldview* was a publication of the Council on Religion and International Affairs begun many years earlier with William Clancy as its editor. Clancy went on to become a priest, and Jim succeeded him as Editor in 1961. It is more accurate to say that *Worldview* was re-launched in the early seventies in a very different format and with great ambitions, some of which were realized. I stand by my statement that *Worldview* "was in important ways the forerunner to FIRST THINGS."

■ Kenneth Woodward wrote in the last issue about the *New York Times*' obsessing over Catholic sex scandals, indicating how, in the absence of anything new, front-page stories rehash three or four times earlier front-page stories. The obsession has its amusing aspects. The *Times* has a feature called "World Briefing," with short squibs of a few hundred words by correspondents around the world writing on events that do not warrant, or at least do not get, fuller treatment. The feature is divided into sections:

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Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia. In today's paper, as usual, Europe gets most attention, with five stories treating right-wing politics in Austria, Ireland's problems with the EU, the Greek rejection of Nazi-era claims for compensation, etc. For Africa, our attention is drawn to Mugabe's repression in Zimbabwe, opposition politics in Kenya, and Christian-Muslim fighting in Nigeria, while the Asia coverage deals with human rights violations in China and Vietnam. Then we come to the "Americas" section. Americas, which excludes the U.S., takes in big countries such as Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru, along with perpetual crisis spots of Central America, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Think of all the newsworthy things that must be happening in this huge area that includes hundreds of millions of people: earthquakes, economic turmoil, rebel insurgencies, assassinations, murders, trade agreements and disagreements, something new in literature or the arts, elections, and on and on. Surveying that large part of the globe from the heights of 43rd Street, an editor decides that from the Americas one item, and one item only, must be brought to the attention of the readers of the *Times*: a priest in Mexico City is accused of sexually abusing minors. Our newspaper of record comes through once again. (To the protest from the peanut gallery: no, I'm not obsessing over the *Times*. The item just happened to catch my eye as I was giving the *Times* its fifteen minutes of attention over early morning coffee. I thought it mildly amusing, as the *Times*, in its ideologically driven earnestness, increasingly is.)

■ Samuel Huntington, author of *The Clash of Civilizations*, is almost always worth listening to. (I don't know why I slipped that "almost" in there. I suppose it's from the habit of writing about lesser thinkers.) The Washington-based Ethics and Public Policy Center had Huntington in for an extended conversation with journalists in the course of which he expounded, as he does in his book, on the new centrality of culture rather than ideology in international conflicts, and the attendant reemergence of religion as a critical factor in human affairs. One of his themes was that globalization does not necessarily mean Westernization, never mind Americanization. American executives of world companies, he notes, insist that "Globalization means localization," and Huntington describes some of the ways in which companies such as McDonald's make themselves indigenous to the countries where they operate. Yet many are offended by America's "cultural imperialism," and Huntington is asked how we might restrain the offensive aspects of our world hegemony. Huntington's answer, I think, lifts up a dimension of globalization seldom discussed: "I'm an unrestrained enthusiast for restraint. I would hope we could act in a more cautious, moderate way. But I think in our culture there is the assumption of universalism, the assumption that everyone else in the world is basically like us in terms of culture and values. If they are not like us, they want to *become* like us. And if they don't want to become like us, then there is something wrong with them. They don't understand their true interests, and we have to persuade them to want to become like us. That's a most unfortunate set of assumptions on our part, and it underlies a lot of what we do. We're going to have to get used to living in a world where there are different cultures, different civilizations, different values and priorities. There may be some sort of convergence, but only over a very long period of time. I argue in my book that when countries begin to modernize, modernization and Westernization seem very closely linked, and the modernizing countries think they have to import all these things from the West in order to develop. In Japan, back in the 1870s, there was a big discussion of whether they should adopt English as a national language in order to modernize and develop. They decided not to, and they developed very nicely without having the benefits of the English language. But there's this sort of assumption that the two have to go together. As the process goes on, however, modernization and Westernization become separate. As countries modernize, they tend to find new virtues in their traditional values and culture, and they attribute to those traditional values their success at modernization."

■ Get in line to list yours as "the fastest growing religion in America." Islam, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and now Wicca all make the claim. It helps if you start out with a really small number. Wicca claims fifty thousand, although it seems nobody has, or could, take a count. Wicca started with an English eccentric, Gerald Gardner, who in the late 1930s pasted together sundry rituals and customs, including nudity, from a local coven of witches, Indian folklore, and the far-out British sex practitioner Aleister Crowley. Wicca, the Anglo-Saxon word for wizard, he mistranslated as "wise one." Catherine Sanders reviews a recent Wicca book, *Witchcrafting: A Spiritual Guide to Making Magic*, by Phyllis Curott. Writing in the *Weekly Standard*, Sanders says, "The sexual theme appears in her chapter on Sabbats, the Wiccan holidays. Curott instructs readers to not only dance 'skyclad,' but to 'make love with someone you love' after returning from the maypole celebration celebrated the first day of May. 'And don't forget to practice safe sex!' she cheerily adds. You'd think that the 'spirituality' of Wicca would be vitiated

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by the fact that even its practitioners admit that they've made it all up. But the problem here is finally not that this is all silly and incoherent. It's rather that those who practice it do so because they like toying with an evil they don't actually believe exists, which gives them the frisson of doing something wicked while promising they'll be safe doing it." Of course it's easy to dismiss all this as a silliness indulged by people with neuroses to spare, but that it is silly doesn't mean it's harmless, says Sanders. "After most Wiccan rituals, women are encouraged to turn to one another and inculcate self-worship by saying, 'Thou Art Goddess.' History suggests that beliefs rooted in narcissism and hedonism tend to issue in nasty consequences. Don't go dancing naked around the maypole with these women. It starts silly, and it ends cruel."

■ As everyone knows, America is a hothouse of religious pluralism. If anyone doubts that, just refer him to Diane Eck's *The New Religious America*, discussed in these pages in the October 2001 issue. In response to our society's maddeningly churning diversity, the Veteran Affairs Department has changed its rules. Until 1979, grave headstones that the department provides for deceased veterans included only the Latin Cross, Star of David, and Wheel of Righteousness, representing Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist faiths. Now veterans or their families may choose from among no less than thirty-one emblems of belief, including Eckankar, Konko-Kyo, Hindu, and Atheist. There were 306,909 burials last year, and 98.96 percent of the emblems chosen were Christian (including Mormon and Unitarian), while 99.83 percent were Christian or Jewish. All the other emblems combined account for a grand total of 00.17 percent of those chosen. And you still persist in thinking that this country is, even in some minimal sociological sense, Christian America?

■ The plot thickens. In the *Weekly Standard*, Mary Eberstadt published two articles, "Pedophilia Chic," and a couple of years later, "Pedophilia Chic, Reconsidered." Her point was that, as sure as deeper night follows night, the legitimation of pedophilia—or intergenerational sex, as it is politely called—is the next big breakthrough in sexual liberation. She cited as evidence the argument of Hanna Rosin in the *New Republic* that our laws reflect our hang-ups about childhood sexuality, as though Freud had never exploded the myth of the erotic innocence of children. Now Judith Levine has published *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex*, put out by the University of Minnesota Press, with a foreword by Joycelyn Elders, the former Surgeon General. Among Dr. Elders' contributions to the public good, it may be recalled, was pointing out that many children suffer from inadequate skills in masturbating, and the schools should do something about that. Well, now Hanna Rosin reviews the Levine book, which gives her a chance to revisit the question of sex with children. Speaking of her *New Republic* piece, she writes, "In retrospect my tone was a bit too glib for the topic, and certain of my smug little asides make me cringe, especially now that I have a child." In her book Levine writes, "Sex with children does not a pedophile make," a sentence much pilloried by critics. Rosin says that Levine is simply guilty of sloppy grammar, that she really means no more than to say that someone who, maybe just once, has sex with a child does not necessarily fit the clinical profile of a pedophile. Rosin writes, "Grammar aside, Levine seems far too invested in vindicating pedophiles." Just how invested should one be in vindicating pedophiles? Grammar aside, Rosin is now fairly sensible about the matter, suggesting that schools should butt out of the sex education business, lest they end up "robbing my children of their own chance for discovery, and dulling the mystery around the whole thing." Levine, responding to Rosin's criticism, defends both her argument and her grammar. Age of consent laws are arbitrary, she says, and not based on "any evidence of psychological harm." Moreover, "statutory rape prosecutions often do a lot of harm to the putative victim." Levine adds, lest there be any misunderstanding, "That doesn't mean I condone all sex between adults and minors." Somehow I do not think Mary Eberstadt will be reassured.

■ There is no end of books and essays on the topic "Why I am still a Catholic," the implication being that the authors are doing the Church a favor. In this respect, radical feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether, who prefers to call herself a radical ecofeminist, provides a modicum of refreshment. Her purpose is to revolutionize the Catholic Church and, through it, the world. Many years ago, in response to the question why she remains a Catholic, she answered that that is where the mimeograph machines are. I suppose that today her answer would be technologically updated, but the substantive point is that the Church can be used for the revolution. Upon her retirement from twenty-five years of teaching at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, a Methodist school, Ruether said in an interview with *U.S. Catholic* magazine, "Frankly, if I hadn't been born into the Catholic Church I doubt I would have joined it." But she continues to be committed to the project of changing the Church and, she observes, "To do that, I need to continue to identify as a Catholic, although I also function ecumenically and interreligiously, so it's

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not a limitation for me." It is a position that has the merit, albeit very limited merit, of being frank.

■ It's time for the annual survey of names being given babies, something we do each time the government data is released. This year there is also a book on the subject, *A Matter of Taste*, by Harvard sociologist Stanley Lieberson. Lisa, Mary, Karen, Susan, and Kimberley are out. Emily, Madison, Hannah, Ashley, and Alexis are in. The latter were the most popular names for girls born in 2001. Emily and Hannah? Imagine that. They are names I associate with aunts and great-aunts born at the beginning of the last century. Madison, Ashley, and Alexis are, although most parents probably don't know it, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century names for boys. The pattern holds that the cute and the novel prevail in naming girls. In the 1960s, Michael, David, John, James, and Robert were the top five for boys. Now it's Michael, Jacob, Matthew, Joshua, and Christopher. The favorite names for boys continue to be biblical or religious in nature. Does this suggest that greater gravity comes into play in naming boys? That would seem to be the case. One way to put it is that boys are taken more seriously. Or it may be that the arrival of a baby girl evokes a greater mood of delight and whimsy. The story on the Lieberson book in the *New York Times* puts a modernizing spin on the matter: "Whether in names or clothes, fashion reflects the primacy of individual taste over inherited custom. The freer people feel to choose names they like, rather than names of relatives or saints, the faster names go through cycles. Boys' names, which tend to be more influenced by custom, change slower." But the writer does not ask why boys' names change more slowly. One might suggest that there are few things more reflective of "inherited custom," or perhaps even of human nature, than the intuition of parents that there really is a difference between boys and girls. The new thing, dominant in the slice of the culture to which the *Times* caters, is that that elementary intuition is viewed as deeply suspect.

■ It was not until 1975 that the *Times Literary Supplement* adopted the policy of running signed reviews. Reviewing a book on the centenary of the *TLS*, David Lodge writes: "T. S. Eliot believed that anonymity was a beneficial discipline, especially for the young critic, when practiced under the eye of a scrupulous editor like Bruce Richmond. In a tribute to the latter on his ninetieth birthday, Eliot said: 'I learned to moderate my dislikes and crotchets, to write in a temperate and impartial way; I learned that some things are permissible when they appear over one's name, which become tasteless eccentricity or unseemly violence when unsigned.'" One may take liberties when writing in one's own name. It's not as though the august editorial board of a publication had resolved that John Doe's argument is really dumb. It's simply Whatshisname's opinion of John Doe's argument. At least I feel free to take such liberties in this space, although never, I hope, descending to the tasteless, eccentric, unseemly, or violent. Lodge refers to "the increasingly personalized, media-dominated cultural climate," and I've been thinking about that in connection with the "blogger" phenomenon. Many readers are no doubt familiar with the rapidly multiplying number of personalized weblogs (hence "bloggers") on the Internet. Andrew Sullivan is one of the phenomenon's notable perpetrators and celebrants and he has remarked, half jokingly I assume, that this space is the original instance of blogging. This space is, I admit, largely composed of running and mostly random reflections and reactions occasioned by events, arguments, and sundry curiosities loosely related to the mix of religion, culture, and public life. And it is unabashedly personal. Yet I would prefer not to be classed with the bloggers. Not out of snobbery, mind you. There are some important differences. For one thing, there are other editors involved, and it is by no means rare that they persuade me that I really don't want to say something that I said. Most important, there is a very big difference between the bloggers' daily or five-times-per-day postings and a journal that appears ten times a year. We have a lead time of weeks between going to press and the journal's hitting the mails, which makes the "use by" date an important consideration. Especially in commenting on unfolding developments, one must ask, "How will this read a month from now?" And, given our readers' propensity for saving issues, copying items for classroom use, and citing them in articles and books, one asks, "How will this read a year or two from now?" That is somewhat short of the wisdom induced by writing *sub specie aeternitatis*, but it does provide a measure of perspective. It lends itself to more considered reflection than, for instance, blogger Mark Shea's clever riposte to Kathryn Jean Lopez's point posted fifteen minutes ago. Don't get me wrong; I rather like the blogger insurgency. I quickly learned it can be addictive; going from link to link, you discover that you've wasted an hour or more on mildly entertaining ephemera. So I have a rule of giving the bloggers no more than fifteen minutes per day, which has the happy effect of cutting about the same amount of time from reading the *Times*, which in recent months, under the drearily leftist editorship of Howell Raines, has become less and less interesting, not to mention less and less reliable. Well, as you may have surmised, this little item rather perfectly illustrates the point,

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doesn't it? Whether it will be of interest by the time you read this, I have no idea. But it is provoked by the estimable T. S. Eliot's observation about personalized writing, and may therefore stand the test, if not of the ages, at least of a few weeks.

■ There's that old gibe about a nuclear bomb dropped on New York and eliciting the *Washington Post* headline, "Nuclear Attack on New York: Women and Minorities Hardest Hit." In an instance of life aspiring to parody, the *Post* headline about a mad sniper who drove around the D.C. area killing people at apparent random reads, "Arbitrary Victims, Identical Fate: County's Growing Diversity Reflected in Those Gunned Down." There's a bright side to everything.

■ There has been a striking increase in the number of high school seniors, male and female, who say they are virgins. Researchers attribute that to the rampant spread of venereal diseases, plus the effect of abstinence programs. We may hope that a moral awakening may be a contributing factor. Also, a national study by the University of California, Berkeley, finds that there are significantly different views on abortion between Americans aged fifteen to twenty-two and those aged twenty-seven to fifty-nine. Forty-four percent of the young people—compared to 34 percent of the adults—support various restrictions on abortion. Planned Parenthood and its allies say this is because young people do not remember when abortions were illegal, and there is no doubt something to that. People who think there are too many abortions and favor more protective laws for the unborn, but also want to keep abortion as a fall-back option in emergencies, have not yet experienced a moral awakening. On the other hand, more protective laws would save lives. Perhaps with the consequence that people would no longer think there are "too many" abortions. So the news from the Berkeley study is mixed. Much like life itself.

■ For years Hadley Arkes of Amherst pressed and pushed and argued and countered counterarguments, until he was at risk of making a pest of himself. Would it not be a good idea, he relentlessly queried, to at least take a very small step and establish in law that it is not allowed to kill babies who are already born? You might have thought that was already the law, but it was not. The pro-abortion position is that even a born baby is to have its existence defined exclusively by the mother. If she has an abortion, for the obvious reason that she does not want a baby, then a baby born alive is, in the eyes of the law, not a baby and could be killed. Or, as one judge put it, "the woman has a right to a dead fetus." It sounds as grotesque as it is, but that was the state of the law. Until Professor Arkes finally prevailed and all his erudite peskiness paid off with the passage of the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. Now it is established that a born baby is not an entity defined by human will but is a baby, and is not to be killed. Planned Parenthood and its allies fought the measure every step of the way, saying it was a small but crucial move in the direction of overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Let us hope they are right. Just between us, I think that is what my friend Hadley Arkes had in mind all along. Now the irrepressible fellow comes back with a list of possible measures President Bush might initiate, such as Justice Department inquiries into abortion-related practices in hospitals and other facilities receiving federal funds. They might not have any immediate legal or other practical effect, but they might put the pro-abortionists further on the defensive. Arkes writes: "And yet, just by posing these questions, or mulling over, in public, the possibility of executive orders, the administration could set off tremors among its adversaries. Perhaps President Bush could even ponder a problem aloud, as Ronald Reagan often did, in his remarks on the State of the Union. Mr. Bush could say, 'We came together as Republicans and Democrats to protect the child who survived an abortion. But what does that mean? Does the child have an intrinsic dignity that commands our respect and protection? And if so, what follows from that? How does that understanding bear on the way we treat other children, born or unborn? I am not offering answers tonight; I just pose the question.' The President may not wish to remind some of his followers that his position on abortion is one they find uncomfortable. Still, they are not likely to be offended by a simple, disarming posing of questions. There is little to be lost in this gentle public teaching, and yet it may set off movements that cause wonder to us all." Hadley Arkes, it should be added, knows about gentle (and sometimes not so gentle) measures that set off changes that cause wonder to us all. If there are pro-life organizations out there that are bestowing awards in the near future, Prof. Arkes can be reached at Amherst College, Department of Political Science, Amherst, Massachusetts 01002.

■ The "Jewish lobby" has America in its hip pocket. So says Philip Weiss, a leftist columnist of the *New York Observer*. It's not polite to mention the Jewish lobby, he says, but it is the power that is calling the plays. He calls "moronic" a talk show on the difference between European and American attitudes toward the Middle East. The show ignored the obvious: "Jews are empowered in American society in a way that they are not in Europe. Indeed, Jewish money may be the most important segment of Democrat Party fund-raising."

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In this year's primaries, Jewish money bankrolled the defeat of Congressmen who dared to speak a brave word for Palestinian rights, Weiss complains. But liberal Jews don't want to talk about the nefarious workings of the Zionist lobby. A liberal journalist friend told Weiss, "Well, we know where that conversation ends up: in the ovens of Auschwitz." So afraid are Jews of stirring an anti-Semitic backlash. Liberal Jews pretend to be shocked when Arabs speak about the Jewish influence in the American media. The Arabs are simply stating the obvious, says Weiss. "It's only understandable that these theories have taken root. Jews represent an American elite. They have money, they have power, and Ariel Sharon has explicitly called upon them to use their influence over the American political process." As a result, liberal Jews are holding hands with "right-wing Republicans" and other unsavory types. "The [William] Kristols, [Charles] Krauthammers, and [William] Safires have brought in their crowd—neoconservatives and Christian evangelicals." That these men, all Jews, command the constituency of evangelical Christians is a fresh insight into the curious workings of American politics. Philip Weiss has a point, however unoriginal, about the influence of Jews in our country and its policy toward the Middle East. Whether one wants to call it "the Jewish lobby" is, I suppose, a matter of taste, at least in part. Most Jews are strongly pro-Israel, having reason to believe that some of the nations surrounding it just may mean what they say when they declare their intention to drive the Jewish state into the sea. As for evangelical Christians, they are hardly the puppets of Jewish neocons (or of the libertarian Safire). They have their own reasons—sometimes wildly apocalyptic, more often soberly biblical—for believing that there is a providentially intended connection between Jews, Christians, and the land they call holy. So why is Philip Weiss flirting with language about Jewish conspiracies that is reminiscent of old-fashioned anti-Semites? Because, I expect, he, like many extremists on both the right and the left, has a hard time accepting that people who disagree with him have, they think, good and entirely respectable reasons for doing so.

■ *Militant Islam Reaches America* by Daniel Pipes (Norton) makes some important points, Judith Miller allows in the *New York Times Book Review*. But his description of the threat posed by militant Islam, or Islamism, has a sometimes "intemperate tone" and, more important, lacks balance. "His prescriptions for what he calls the world's most dangerous movement," Ms. Miller writes, "barely mention the need to defend America's secularism or the extent to which secular laws, values, and traditions are under attack not only by militant Muslims but also by the Bush administration and its allies on the Christian right." But of course. Islamists fly passenger planes into skyscrapers, execute homosexuals and political dissenters, forbid women to show their faces in public, and threaten the world with weapons of mass destruction. But how about the religious fanatics at the Family Research Council who encourage family stability, urge the protection of unborn children, and support parental choice in education? She got you there, Dan Pipes.

■ In Toronto, 800,000 young people hung on his every word. Then he was off to Mexico where he was greeted by what was probably the largest gathering in human history. Then, in quick succession, to Poland where millions turned out to listen, to pray, and to cheer. Each step of the way was accompanied, as usual, by media commentary on his fragility, and speculation that he would now retire. As twenty years ago his youthful athleticism carried the message of vibrant joy in discipleship, so now his physical weakness proclaims the mystery of participation in redemptive suffering. In response to questions about his resigning, he has repeatedly said, "Christ did not come down from the cross." Uwe Siemon-Netto, religion correspondent for UPI and a Lutheran, writes of such press speculation: "Did they really believe that this man who has stood up to the Nazis, the Communists, and a potential assassin had suddenly turned into a petit bourgeois, who says, 'Ah, it's so cozy at home. I'll stay. Let others worry now about evangelizing the world.' Misreading this Pope is of course a quintessentially postmodern malady. We live in a time when it's fashionable to abandon one's responsibilities. Husbands and wives run away from each other at the flimsiest excuses. Parents abandon their children or just have them killed before birth when it seems inconvenient to carry a pregnancy to term. . . . Let's face it, those Pope watchers, who keep cooking up rumors about their man shuffling about a Polish park in felt slippers soon, like some retired postal clerk, are simply caught up in their postmodern narcissism. This is why they fail to grasp the essence of this remarkable man."

■ "We pray for the victims today. May they rest in peace," said John Paul II a year after September 11. "And may God show mercy and forgiveness for the authors of this horrible terror attack." The reaction of Jeff Jacoby, *Boston Globe* columnist, is representative of several I've read. Jacoby makes clear that he's a great admirer of the Pope, but then goes on to say, "Nonetheless, his prayer is an affront," and explains why. Forgiveness must be earned, he says, and offering forgiveness without repentance by the offenders is

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what Dietrich Bonhoeffer meant by "cheap grace." The claim that we are to love and forgive unrepentant evildoers "is worse than theologically unsound; it eats away at the very foundation of civilization," and so forth. So who is responsible for leading the good Pope astray in this instance? I suppose we could blame Jesus who said that we should love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Sometimes, as in Luke 17, he speaks of forgiving the brother who repents, but at other times there is no condition, and nowhere does he speak of forgiveness as being earned. Jacoby defends the Jewish understanding of these matters and that's fair enough. "In the moral universe as in the physical universe," he writes, "there is an order to things. Repentance comes before forgiveness, not the other way around. Those who forgive unrepentant evildoers make the world not a better place, but a worse one." Well, yes and no. On the question of love and forgiveness there may be, as many claim, a substantive difference between Judaism and Christianity. In any event, it's worth noting that the Pope did not forgive the terrorists; he prayed that God might show them mercy and forgiveness. We hear people say, "God may forgive them, but I can't." That's understandable, if it is understood as a confession of our spiritual weakness. But we know we are called to forgive. If I say I forgive the terrorists, it is not—as in sacramental absolution—a statement that affects their standing before the judgment of God. It is certainly not to be confused with excusing what they did. If what they did was excusable, there would be no occasion for forgiving them. To say I forgive them is a statement of my disposition toward them. In full awareness of the evil they did, and never forgetting it, I pray them well; I pray they may find the mercy and forgiveness of God; I refuse to hate them. Others who would do such things must be stopped, if necessary by force, for the good of those whom they would harm and also for their own good. In sum, and just as He told us to, I love my enemies. I confess that I'm not always very good at this, but I'm working on it, in the keen awareness that, if I do not forgive them, I jeopardize my hold on the sheer gift, all unearned, of being forgiven.

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Sources: ELCA and the gay agenda, *Forum Letter*, October 2002. J. Bottum on Francis Fukuyama, *Weekly Standard*, April 29, 2002. Peter Steinfels on Church scandals in the media, *Tablet*, September 14, 2002.

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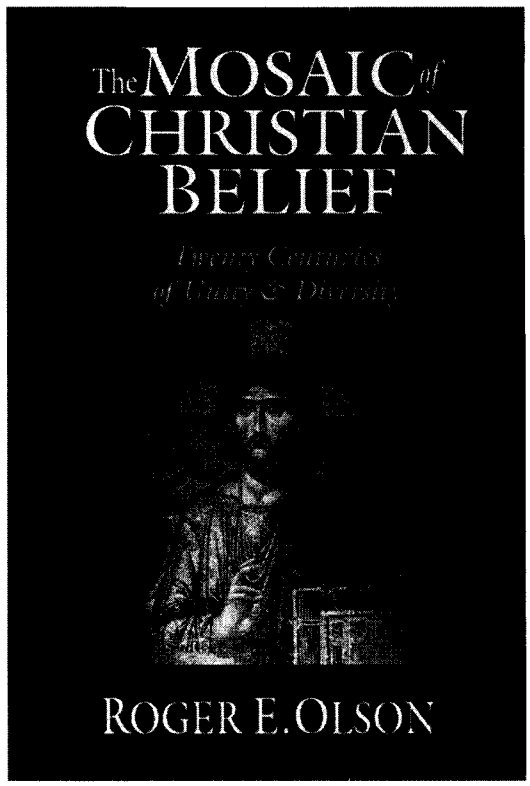

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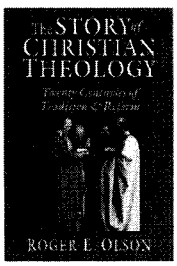

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